THE ART OF WALL·E

Disney · PIXAR

BY TIM HAUSER

FOREWORD BY ANDREW STANTON

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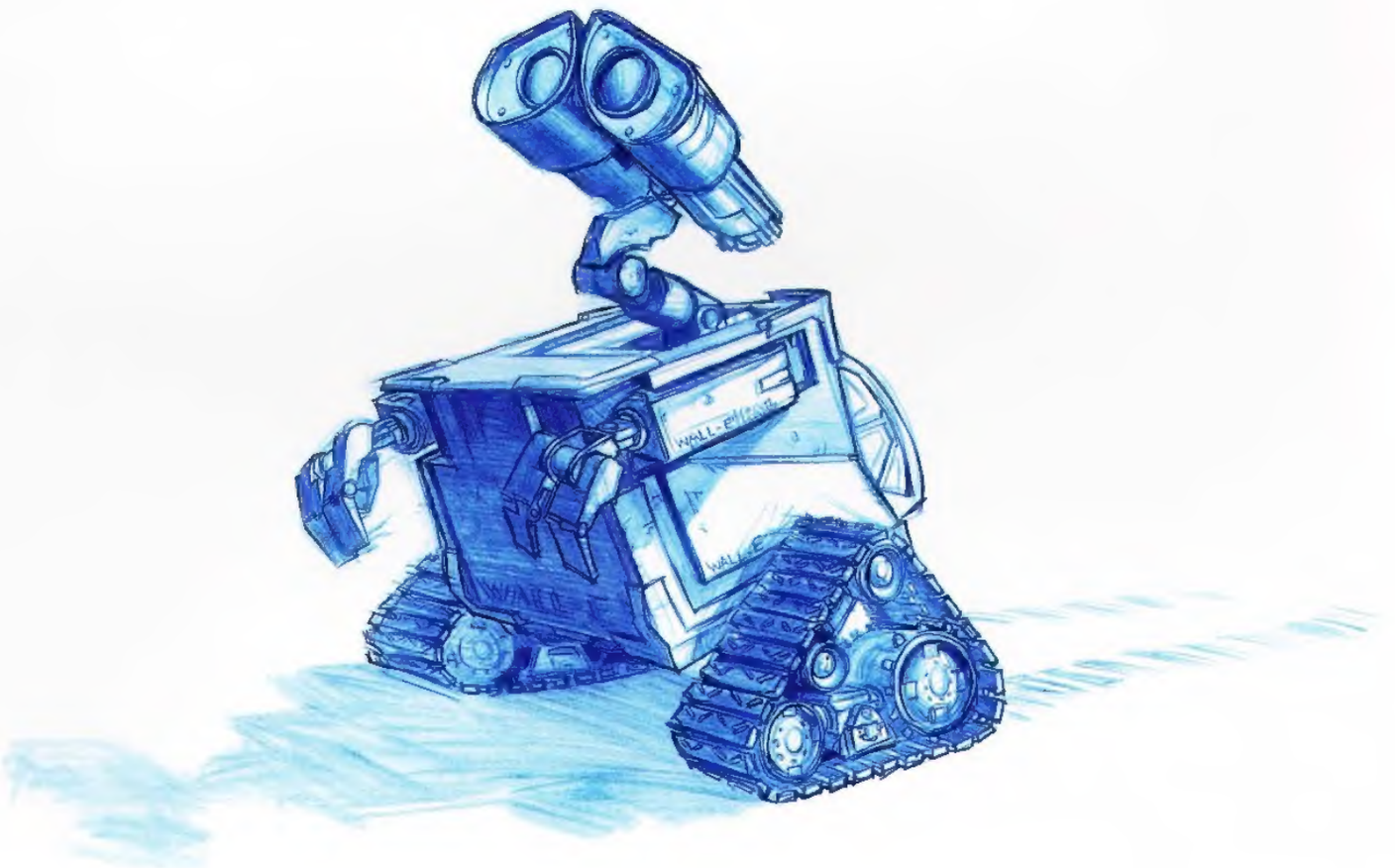

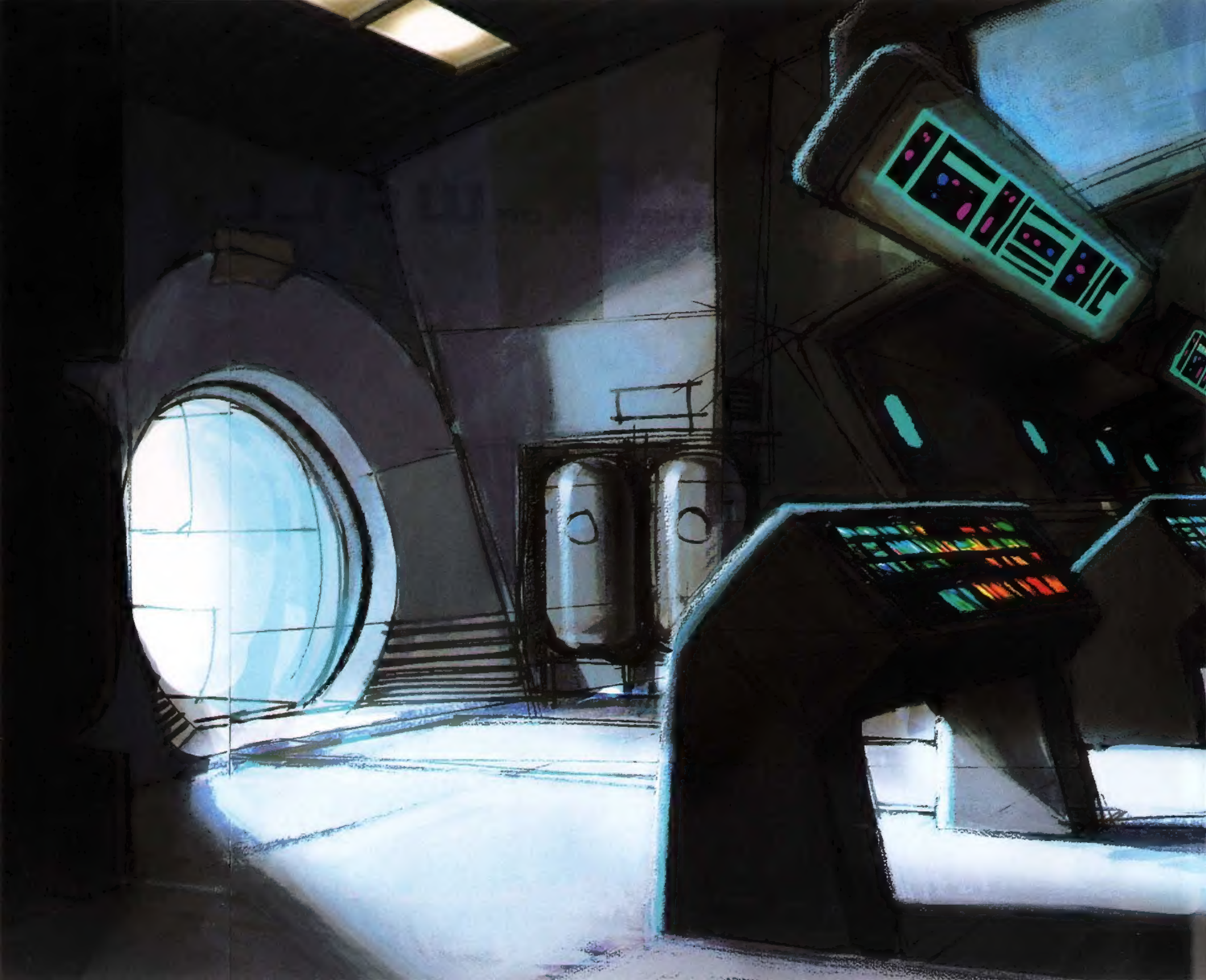

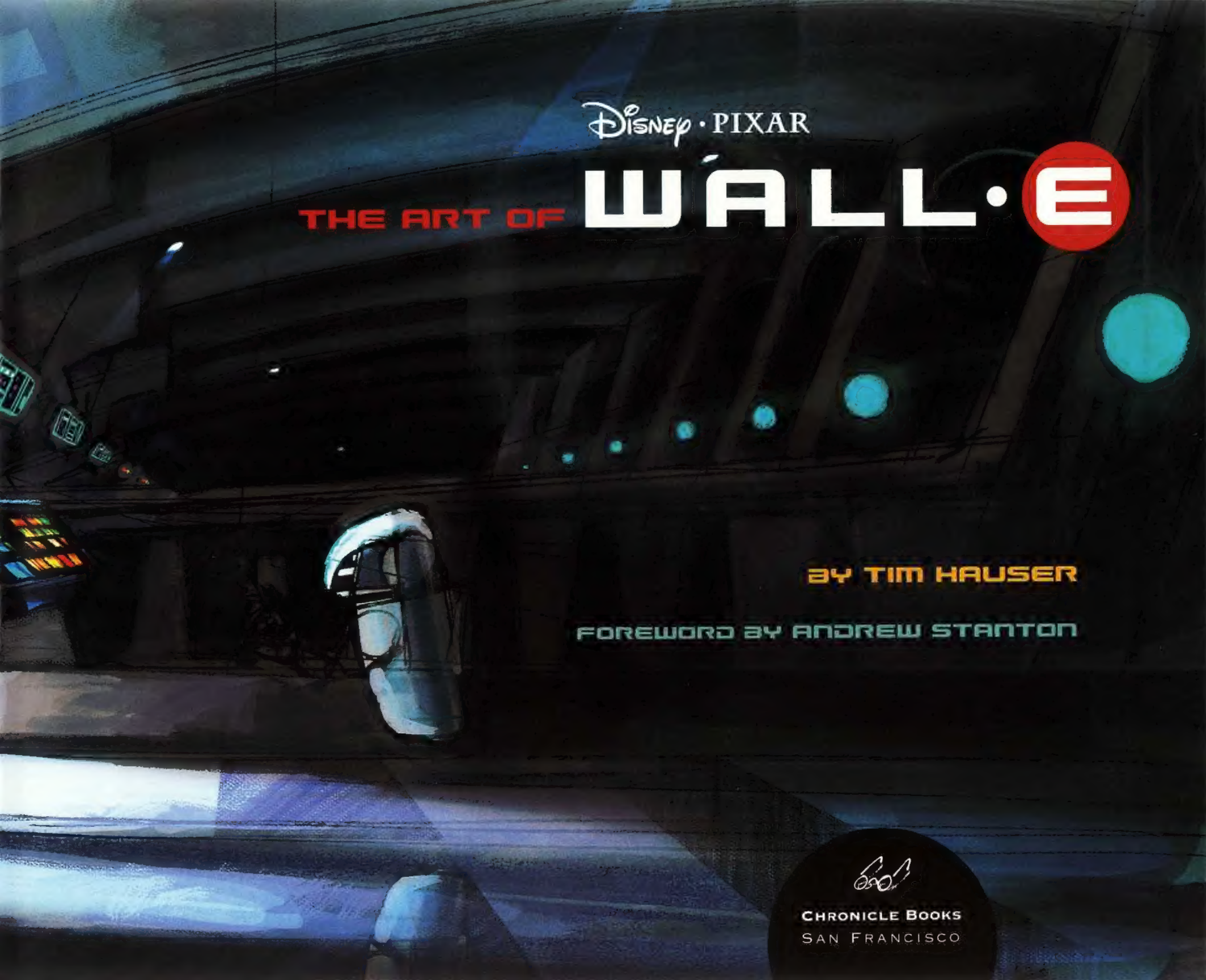

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page 1: **Kristian Norelius, 2006, digital**
pages 2-3: **John Lee, 2006, digital; layout by Jay Shuster**
right: **Noah Klocek, 2005, digital**

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"What if mankind were forced to evacuate Earth and someone forgot to turn the last robot off?"

FOREWORD

That proposed question was the birth of *WALL•E*. That was it. Nothing more. Everything else was an open book. Later, several crucial elements formed—a machine finding life, a love story, a space adventure, humankind's displacement—but still, there were so many blank pages left to fill. More than ever, art and story development would be essential in helping me to coalesce all these ideas that were floating out in the ether.

Science fiction typically involves a fantasy tale, often set in space or the future; therefore, everything (and I mean *everything*) is made up. That is a tremendous amount of work. Plus, our story is a dystopian future. So, not only did we have to come up with how the future looked but we also had to create an implied history of how things used to work within the ruins of that civilization. And almost every member of our cast is a robot. How were they constructed and engineered? How could we design them so their function evoked a personality? The questions and demands of this world were nearly as infinite as space itself. Oh, and I wanted minimal dialogue in the film, so everything had to be explained visually. That's all.

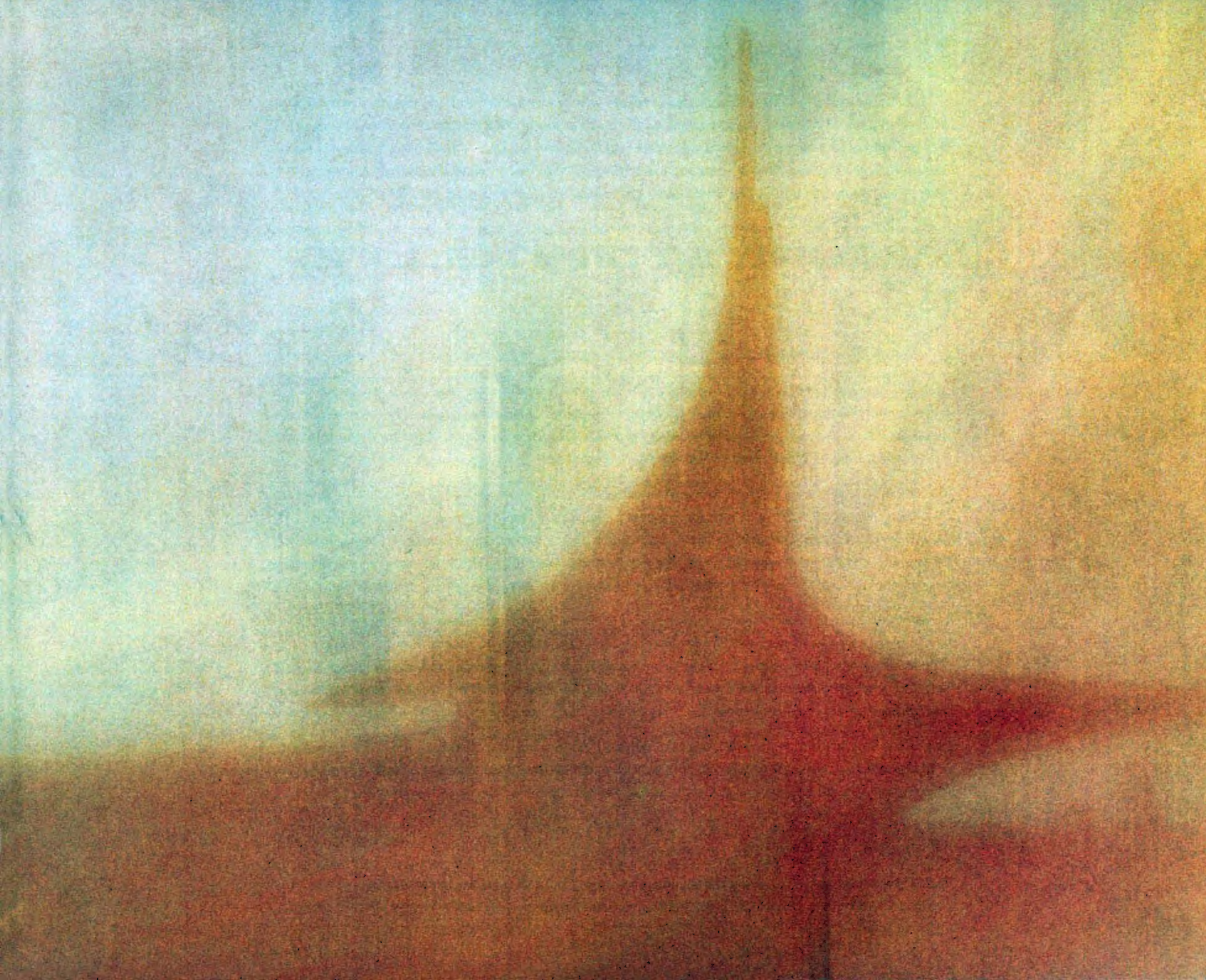
Hopefully, you're beginning to form the same humbling appreciation I have for all the artists on my crew. Some of the solutions came naturally; most were recalcitrant, keeping us awake for nights on end, but the goal was always clear—to make us believe this world already existed and that we, the filmmakers, had just simply found it.

All of the artists had to become storytellers on this picture. If you challenge yourself with each artistic endeavor, always aiming beyond your comfort zone, you invariably become a student of your own work, and the biggest thing I learned on *WALL•E* was that all the major elements that produce a film (design, music, dialogue, acting, camerawork, and editing) play a vital and unique role in telling the story. If you choose to remove one of them (in our case, the dialogue, which was drastically reduced), the other remaining elements must fill the void that is left behind. The job of communicating information suddenly becomes *the* imperative in every instance.

Class is over. If we have done our job correctly, the lights will go down and you'll be effortlessly transported to the world of *WALL•E*. This book is a chance to take a step back afterward, blink in the light, and appreciate how these incomparable artists made that journey happen for you.

ANDREW STANTON, *director/writer*

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital



INTRODUCTION: VISUAL STORYTELLING

"We just loved the idea of the last little robot on the planet Earth," explains director/writer Andrew Stanton. "What would be the best way to tell that story? Well, I wouldn't want the robot to speak English like a human being. I'd want it to communicate within the limitations of how it was constructed, and that just wouldn't demand much dialogue." WALL•E, a machine of few words, is the last Waste Allocation Load Lifter–Earth Class still functioning centuries after the human race has evacuated a trashed planet.

PIX

Amid mountains of garbage and towers of trash, the lonely robot compacts cubes of refuse into orderly stacks. It's an impossible cleanup job, but his determination never wanes. His inspiration to keep with the program? A well-loved VHS tape of *Hello, Dolly!* that has sparked in him a yearning for human emotions as danced and sung in a long ago world with "Color by Deluxe."

WALL•E's romantic dreams begin to become reality when EVE, an advanced Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluator, descends to Earth to probe the planet's inhabitability. EVE's home is the starship *Axiom*, where devolved humans cruise the galaxy waiting until the planet can be repopulated. Falling in love at first sight, WALL•E follows EVE back into space, leaving behind the world he knows for the chance that she might one day hold his hand.

This, the first act of Pixar's science fantasy *WALL•E*, is performed completely in pantomime, which tends to take people by surprise. "We've basically made a silent film," production designer Ralph Eggleston shrugs. "That aspect of it crept up on me, personally. I'm in the art department. I'm thinking about visuals to support the character, to support the moment, those kinds of things. So I'm always having to think of silent film."

"It's not like we were trying to make a movie without dialogue. I mean, it's not a film-school experiment. The lack of dialogue was simply organic to the idea of the film, which is populated by robots, appliances like Luxo Jr.," offers producer Jim Morris, citing Pixar's signature desk lamp.

"I think Andrew was hoping people would get engrossed in the story and then, maybe twenty minutes into it, realize, 'Hey, nobody's talking,'" muses head of story/writer Jim Reardon.

"We have a history here of loving pantomime animation," adds *WALL•E*'s executive producer John Lasseter. "All the short films we created prior to *Toy Story* were done in pantomime. None had

any dialogue. So I always believed in the power of pantomime acting. One of the things I loved most about *Star Wars* was R2-D2 and how much personality this little robot had, without a face and with just sounds," Lasseter recalls. "It was so appealing. It reinforced my feeling that great animation, great characters, don't necessarily come from the dialogue or the voice alone."

The traditions of pantomime reach back to the roots of pure cinema. Storytellers of the silent-film era invented a pictorial language of montage that still defines how we watch movies. Those early film artists became masters of staging, composition, cutting, and stylized acting through facial expression and body language. Epic stories were told without a line of dialogue.

Though the early "talkies" emulated proscenium stage plays, shifting emphasis to the spoken word, young directors who had been raised on the silent films continued to explore a visual path in the modern era of sound. Animators, in particular, have always looked to the silent comedians for inspiration, as their craft is similarly dependent on clarity of pose, timing, and attitude.

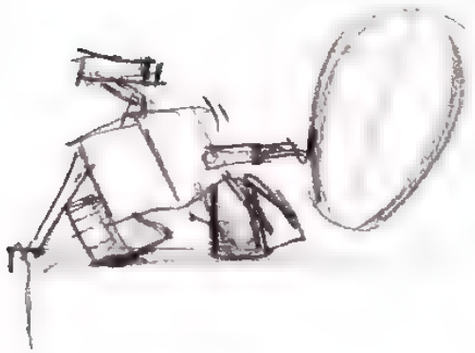
"Every Chaplin movie, every Keaton movie. Every day at lunch we watched one," says Stanton of his *WALL•E* crew. "It's enlightening. It makes you realize that we actually lost more storytelling skills than we gained as a result of going to sound." For modern audiences brought up to expect the rapid-fire wisecracks of computer-generated celebrities, pure pantomime is a novelty. Yet the adage still rings true: "If you want someone's attention, whisper."

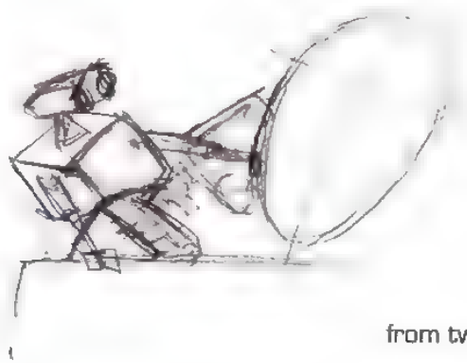
"The silent picture, first of all, is a universal means of expression," wrote comedian Charlie Chaplin as the "talkies" conquered Hollywood. "After all, pantomime has always been the universal means of communication. It existed as the universal tool long before language was born. . . . Action is more generally understood than words. The lift of an eyebrow, however faint, may convey more than a hundred words. Like the Chinese symbolism, it will mean different things, according to its scenic connotation."

Director Alfred Hitchcock, who began his career painting caption cards for silent films, added his perspective on the medium: "The silent pictures were the purest form of cinema; the only thing they lacked was the sound of people talking and the noises," he said. "But this slight imperfection did not warrant the major changes that sound brought in.

"In many of the films now being made, there is very little cinema. They are mostly what I call 'photographs of people talking,'" Hitchcock observed. "When we tell a story in cinema, we should resort to dialogue only when it's impossible to do otherwise. I always try first to tell a story in the cinematic way, through a succession of shots and bits of film in between. . . . To me, one of the cardinal sins for a scriptwriter, when he runs into some difficulty, is to say, 'We can cover that by a line of dialogue.' Dialogue should simply be a sound among other sounds, just something that comes out of the mouths of people whose eyes tell the story in visual terms," Hitch concluded.

animation thumbnails: **Victor Navone, 2005, pencil**





Walt Disney was of the same mind. As animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston wrote, "Walt usually left out the dialogue until a sequence had been developed to a point where he could see just how little was really needed. If the idea could be put over with an expression, an action or a sound effect, or with music, he would not use dialogue. The storyman had to think in visual terms first, and when he did write dialogue it had to tell something about the character and not be exposition."

Disney was also an admirer of the silent comedians like Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd, and their routines greatly influenced his films. "I learned a lot about story-telling from Charlie," Disney recalled of his boyhood idol. "He was full of fun. Loved to clown and act out his stories. I was with him once at the Santa Anita racetrack. He was demonstrating to me the sight gags for his next picture. 'Now the Little Fellow does this,' he pantomimed. 'Then he does that.' Charlie got so engrossed in his recital he didn't notice the crowds gathering around us. And the crowds got so wrapped up in the pathos of his characterization that they forgot all about the race. . . . Charlie taught me that in the best comedy you've got to feel sorry for your main character. Before you laugh with him, you've got to shed a tear for him." WALL•E exemplifies this principle. In many ways, the robot is a reflection of Chaplin's Little Tramp a solitary soul searching for love in an indifferent world.

"It's funny, but both John and I had the instinct that it should really be a love story," says Stanton. "There's something endearing about a machine that falls for another kind of machine he's never seen before. You just wanted to go there with the story because he was just the most lonely character we've ever had."

"We always had this idea of a love story between two opposites when it came to WALL•E," affirms Lasseter. "He is ground-based. He is heavy. He's this little dirty bulldozer. Then here's this light, beautiful, airy angel. They are from two worlds. And, you know? They fall in love."

When robots fall in love, the ensuing romance presents a unique opportunity for animation. A larger-than-life concept lies at the core of an ideal animated tale, a situation rife with possibilities for caricature and exaggeration. It is a premise that's visual by design—a story to show, not tell. Sometimes the inspiration is simply a sketch on a napkin or idea tossed around by friends with a funny picture in their mind's eye.

"One day in the summer of 1994, John Lasseter, Pete Docter, Joe Ranft, and I all had lunch together. *Toy Story* was almost complete and we were thinking, 'If we're going

animation thumbnails: **Victor Navone, 2005, pencil**

to make another movie we've got to get started now,'" Stanton remembers. "So, at that lunch we knocked around a bunch of ideas that eventually became *A Bug's Life; Monsters, Inc.;* and *Finding Nemo*. The last one we talked about that day was the story of a robot named WALL•E."

"My memory of it is that we were at lunch and Joe Ranft pitched this idea about a little robot that was cubing trash on this planet," says Docter. "He knew that with this captivating image, there must be more to the story."

"WALL•E was a 'Robinson Crusoe' robot that you liked before you even knew what he was about," says Stanton. "You knew he was the last robot on Earth, working by himself. He could stop doing it, but he didn't know that. You immediately liked him.

"Pete Docter and I just really couldn't drop the concept," Stanton recalls. "Pete said, 'Oh, this is a cool idea. Let's play with it.' And he actually developed it for a couple of months, but he had no interest in making it a love story. He really wanted to go the comic route."

"In my version there were some aliens that come down to the planet and speak a little bit like the two aliens on *Sesame Street* that go 'yip-yip-yip-yip,'" Docter chirps in a convincing Muppet dialect. "They could have this sort of gibberish kind of language and you'd infer what they were saying, but you would never hear any intelligible English or French or any language."

The story, then known as "Trash Planet," completed several orbits before crashing to Earth. But Andrew Stanton was haunted by the idea, returning to ruminate on the plot during downtime on other projects. "I started thinking about WALL•E," says Stanton, "and suddenly, within a day, that entire first act fell from the sky into my lap. Then I couldn't stop thinking about it."

The rest of the story was not so easy to land. "For a long time we struggled to come up with a story arc for the lead character," Reardon says. "'How does he grow?' we asked. And it wasn't working. After looking at the work of the silent comedians, we concluded that Keaton doesn't have a story arc, he just does his character. Chaplin really doesn't either. They just are. It's how they affect everyone else involved that matters. So we said, 'WALL•E just is who he is and he's going to have an effect on everybody else.' If you think about it, the story arc in the movie is actually EVE's."

In time, Stanton also found a seed under the rubbish of discarded ideas—what he refers to as his "key image," which symbolizes the emotional core of the story. This inspirational snapshot kept him centered during the process of change. "It was the plant. It was the hope of this little spark of life against all the odds, against all this trash, all this decay, all this man-made stuff," he recalls. "It evolved from the inspiration you get when you see that dandelion pushing through the crack in the pavement in New York City. Against all odds, life is trying to happen, trying to be there for all the right reasons."

The image represented not only hope for Earth's regeneration but also the revival of the human spirit through an unlikely source: synthetic life. "Andrew's theme for the movie was 'Love will overcome the programming of life,'" says Reardon. "WALL•E falls in love with EVE the moment he sees her and he's willing to ride a rocket through the universe, willing to screw up the equilibrium of everything that exists—just because he's in love with this other robot."

Stanton's vision for presenting that premise onscreen was unique to say the least. "I did a lot of musical theater in high school. And one of the productions was *Hello, Dolly!*" As a result of Stanton's youthful stint on the boards, two songs from the 1969 movie version of *Hello, Dolly!*—"Put On Your Sunday Clothes" and "It Only Takes a Moment"—were recast as romantic themes for the robot lovers.

"I thought, nobody's going to say 'I love you,' and nobody's going to say, 'Will you marry me?' The characters in *WALL•E* don't have that kind of vocabulary," Stanton recalls. "So how do you convey that sentiment? I suddenly realized that WALL•E could see the actors hold hands and walk away in a movie clip. That could become his term for 'I love you'! It worked on a thematic level. It worked on an entertainment level. And it also worked to stock my toolbox for telling stories without a lot of dialogue."

"It was Andrew's thing. He wanted WALL•E to see the world of humanity through this one old *Hello, Dolly!* VHS tape," Lasseter muses. "Boy, that's unusual in an animated film. But after seeing the potential of it, yeah, we said, it is unusual, and that's what we loved about it. It's so entertaining and fun. It helps you realize that there's more humanity in this little robot WALL•E than there is in all the beings up on the *Axiom*."

animation thumbnails: **Victor Navone, 2005, pencil**

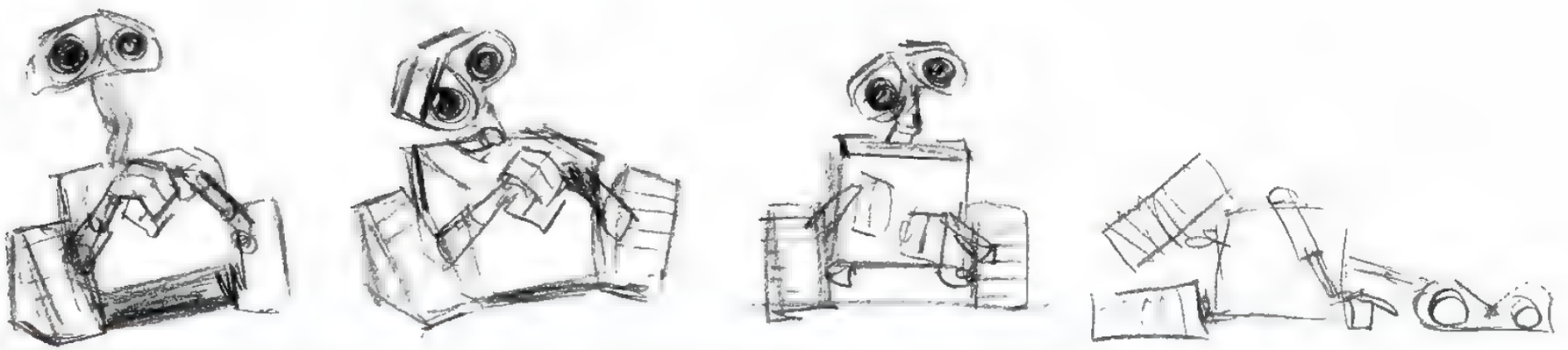
"That first act just sort of came to me and rocked my socks off. It just worked," says Stanton. "So, it's been this search for five years to find the right ending."

"The movie now is very different, after the first act, than what we started out with. Andrew brings the story down to a real Spartan simplicity at some point and then allows the animators to embellish on that," adds Morris. "You want the plot of an animated film to be pretty simple at its core so you can explore that character stuff and not get too dense with plot detail. If you have too much detail, it takes away from your ability to do great things with the characters and create those moments that work."

Indeed, simplicity and clarity give the visual storyteller room to grow. Complex plots are inevitably weeded out in favor of action. A streamlined narrative allows animators to take center stage with the gags, performance, and personality quirks that are their bread and butter. "The joy is in watching a single character come up with a process of thought and expression," Stanton considers. "To be honest, if you look at filmmaking today, we don't allow much room for that to happen."

"With a movie like this, t' are calling out animators," laughs animator Alan Barillaro. "We always complain, 'We can do t' is without dialogue. Stop hitting it on the nose.' And then they give us this movie and we think, 'Damn it. This is a lot of frickin' work!' But that's what we asked for."

Dialogue tends to dictate the timing of a scene, anchoring animation to the prerecorded tracks and rhythms of the voice talent. With pantomime acting, the animator has more freedom to create, to blossom in full performance. "The biggest difference is how long you stay on a shot," explains Stanton, "There is so much more attention focused on the character, on what he's doing and how he's acting. You don't cut very quickly. You sit and watch them do their stuff."



"Animators always want bigger chunks of acting. If you look at a Buster Keaton shot, it's not just sixty frames or two hundred frames—the moment being performed is sometimes a minute long," agrees Barillaro. "If you split the shots of that one Buster Keaton moment among seven actors, it's going to play slightly differently. You want to give that person the opportunity to play the whole joke, not half the joke."

Like that of any actor, the animator's skill is one of observation and communication. His or her ability to evoke an emotional response is aided when audiences recognize traits of their friends, family, or pets in the characters. "Because there's no dialogue, the audience has to bring something to it and they immediately invest more than they would normally," says Eggleston.

"I really believe that there is a different mode of processing that happens when you're watching a character and you have to fill in the blanks yourself," Stanton adds. "You are drawing from the well of your own memories of times when you were sad or when you first loved somebody. So you are getting more emotional bang for your buck in attachment because of the inference. It's powerful stuff to be playing with. It's all about audience participation. Viewers actually do want to work for their entertainment when they watch a movie. They just don't want to know they're doing it."

Without dialogue, a greater burden falls to the overall shot to convey context for the character. Composition, sets, and props take up the slack and help to communicate time, place, and continuity. The eye must be directed to the answers. The audience's understanding of the background information can't be taken for granted.

"You can't expect dialogue to fill in what's going on," says director of photography Jeremy Lasky. "So, we are always asking, Where is that character? What's in the background? What can we put in the frame that will subconsciously reinforce that emotion? How do you make the shot interesting? Without characters talking, everything that has to be set up, every little bit of backstory the audience needs to understand, must be conveyed visually."

"There are scenes where WALL•E rolls past a bank with two hundred automatic teller machines. He passes a superstore that's bigger than any we've ever seen. So the shot provides clues about where things have gone on Earth," lighting director of photography Danielle Feinberg illustrates. "Then he drives past a bunch of other WALL•E models that have long since broken down. Just one shot in the whole movie, but it tells you a huge amount about what's happened in the story."

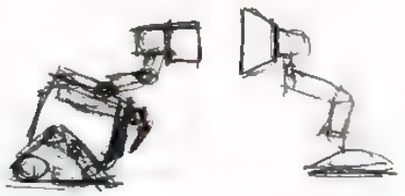
"It's a fun playground to be in, but it is humbling," nods Stanton. "It's been very eye-opening to realize how much we really do use dialogue to get through a lot of gray areas, to connect gaps. To just be able to say, 'Oh, the bathroom? It's right over there,' or 'The red one. Press the red button'—those

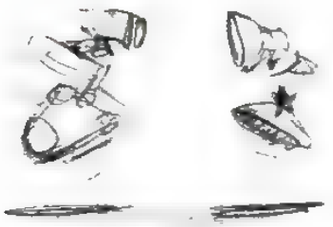
are huge storytelling devices that we usually get to use in a movie. When we can't do that, we have to be at the top of our visual game in the storytelling department."

"All of the visual details are specific, a thousand times more than in any movie I've ever worked on," comments Eggleston. "It's all about specificity on every level to support the idea of a silent movie It's pretty crazy."

From cave paintings to hieroglyphs, from comic books to graphic interface, the talents of artists have been used to convey information without the aid of spoken language. The art of animation is the very definition of visual storytelling. "In the art department, we really are storytellers and I've had Andrew tell me that very thing in no uncertain terms—we're storytellers, not just artists," sketch artist Noah Klocek relates. "Because the whole point is not to make something look pretty; it's to tell somebody something. To communicate. And the tool that we use is design. It's not typography or language. It's visual."

With a grin, Lasseter recalls a simple word of advice from an old friend, mentor, and renowned animation director: "Chuck Jones always said that, with great animation, you should be able to turn off the sound and still be able to tell what's going on."





animation thumbnails: **Victor Navone, 2005, pencil**

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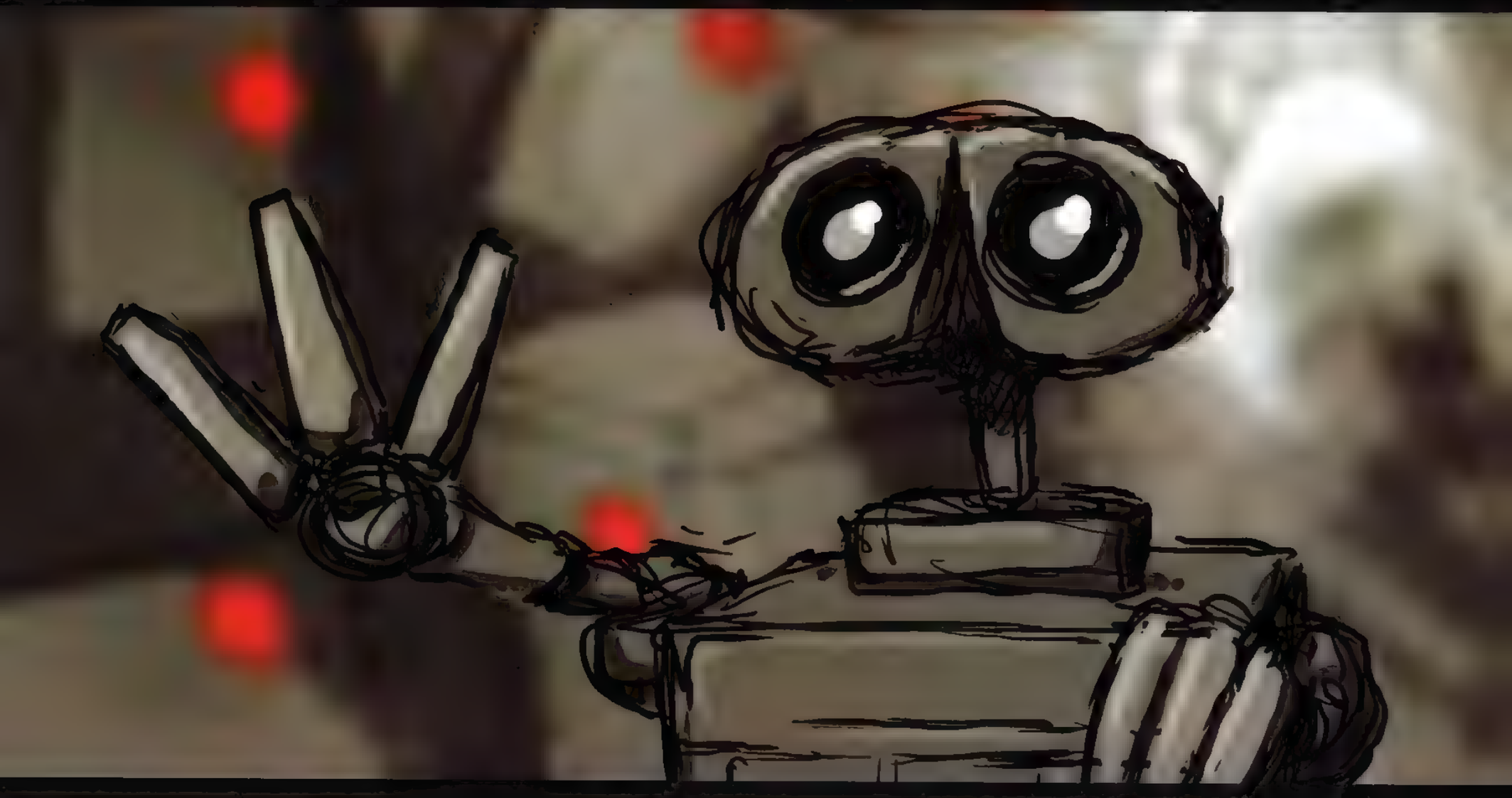


previous spread storyboard: Ronnie del Carmen, 2004, graphite & digital

this page storyboard: Kyle Shockley, 2006, digital

"Now, at our studio, we don't write our stories. We draw them," explained Walt Disney. It's the model Pixar still follows today.

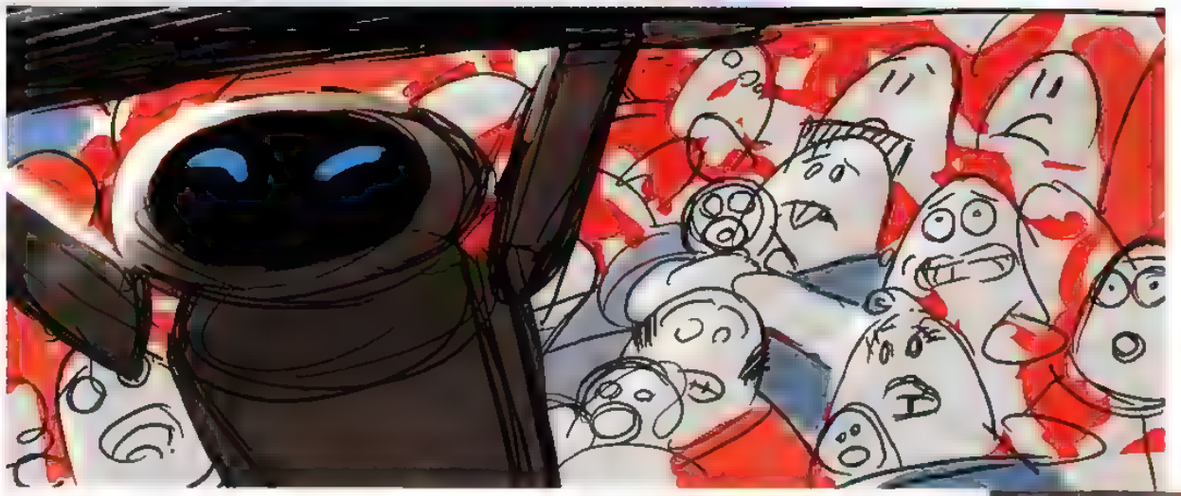
CINEMATIC DICTATION

As the early cartoons turned from crude gags to more elaborate storylines, the limitations of a traditional screenplay became apparent. The nature of the medium was its pictures, not words. A new way of planning stories was needed that worked visually rather than verbally. So Walt Disney invented the storyboard.

"The storyboard is ideally suited to cartoon making," Disney explained. "It tells the story graphically, exactly as the camera's eye will see it, and is also flexible. Changes in the storyboard can be made by merely unpinning sketches and substituting others or even changing the sequence of the boards. The boards show pace, movement, excitement."

"Walt wanted to see the whole plot on a couple of boards," wrote animator Ward Kimball in a memoir. "He wanted to see it visually. Reading meant nothing to him. Words meant nothing to him. Pictures were his whole bag. He'd come in and look at the story. He'd criticize. He'd say, 'We need somebody else here, and this stuff over here is monotonous.' And he'd rip the drawings off the boards just like tearing pages out of a script."

In live filming, storyboards are often used to "stage" the action or block out shots. In animation, a storyboard invents the action itself. The storyboard is not a mere illustration of the script, but the essence of creation. "In live-action film, the production illustrators I've seen are trying to solve problems for the director ahead of time, for camera angles, ogistics, etc.," said late Pixar story guru Joe Ranft. "What we're doing is different in that it's more character-based. It's like you're playing around with the first stabs at what the acting is going to be like. . . . We're working in the Disney tradition of storyboarding," he noted. "In the early days, they developed their stories pretty much 100 percent



through drawings. There's something that happens when you see it in a drawing that suggests new possibilities. There's something concrete. When you read it on a page, everyone's imagination is open to many possibilities. . . . The second you do a drawing of it, all the unseen potential wealth in the scene can come out."

Inventive visual moments like the surreal dream of pink elephants in *Dumbo,* the scene where mice remake Cinderella's dress, or the chase through a Monstropolis warehouse of dimensional doorways don't read well in descriptive form. How does a screenwriter type a description of dogs falling in love while sharing spaghetti or robots holding hands while watching *Hello, Dolly!* and fully convey the quirky charm of the moment? You need to see it.

Without artists participating in the writing process, the development of animated ideas can be limited to those that are more easily communicated through the world of words. A screenplay or outline is useful for blocking out plot structure and emotional character arcs, but it's only the first step. "Screenwriting is not writing. A screenplay is not something to be held up and read as a finished piece, and it's not the end result of a creative endeavor. It's the beginning. It's an intermediary form. It's a means of documenting cinematic storytelling, of transcribing the movie in your head. It's what I call cinematic dictation," says Andrew Stanton.

"Andrew and I are both animators and story guys, and, even though we sometimes write with words, we're always thinking of it visually," offers Jim Reardon. "That's just one advantage we have over some writers who are always thinking in words first. They are thinking of structure just like we are, but it helps us that we have experience in telling stories visually."

"The script is something you start with," explains John Lasseter. "It generates the storyboarding for the first draft, or the first edition, of the story reel. After that you just stay in the story world and rework and rework the storyboards until it all comes together."

After a storyboard is completed, it is photographed in sequence and cut together to form a "story reel." The reel becomes a living blueprint for the finished film. Because the entire production crew will rely on it, the reel must clearly demonstrate the entertainment value of a scene to everyone involved. "With story reels, you are basically storyboarding the movie," Stanton describes. "You put it in comic-book form and you put it up on the screen. You use your own voice as a scratch and you use music from CDs you've bought. And you end up with this rough, bumpy facsimile of what your movie might feel like. It's amazing. It opens your brain."

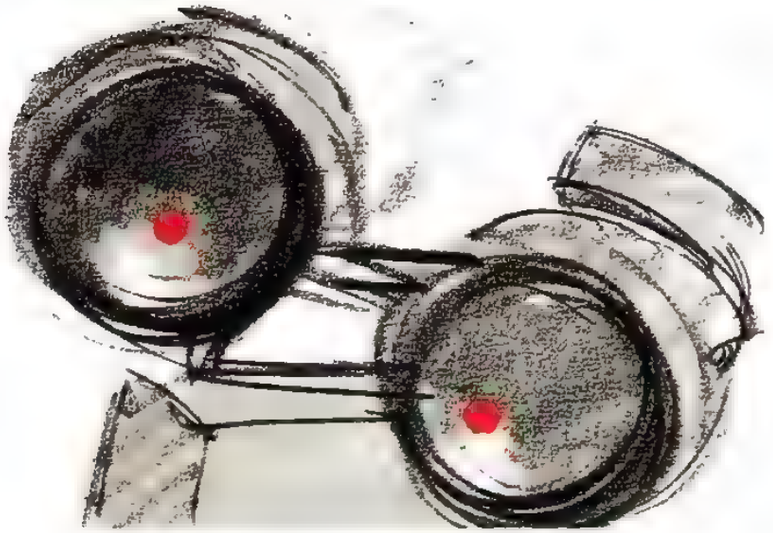
"I think we have broken the record for storyboards on this show. I know we're at over 80,000 drawings " reveals Reardon. "But the guys who are actually creating the final drawings are doing more than boarding; they are laying this thing out. It's a lot more animated than most story reels."

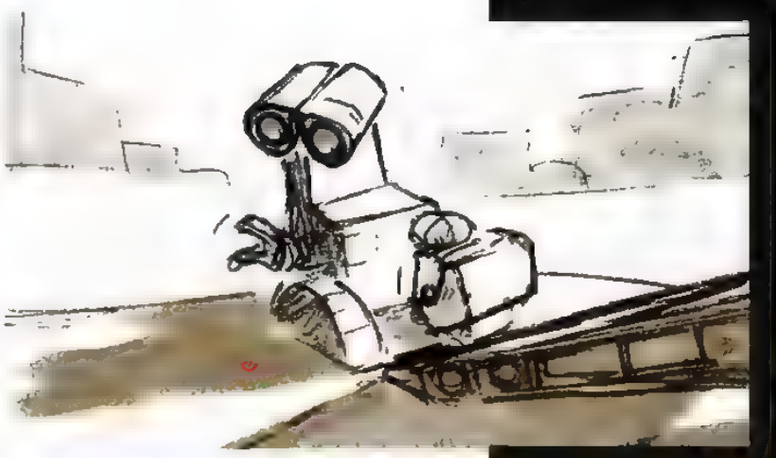
"I worked in story for a while and you had to be more specific. I got into trouble for animating a little bit too much in the reels, because I could see there was emotion that you had to get into. And to make that read in pantomime, you had to put in more drawings than you would normally," says animator Angus MacLane. "With the story reel, it's a great way to tell whether something's working or not," Lasseter adds. "I always believe that it's got to be there in the story reel. That story reel has got to entertain you like the final film will. Sometimes the drawings can be very simple, but they're communicating to you what the movie is going to be."

And if the reels don't capture the audience, it's back to the drawing board. "We look at it as just another form of rewriting the picture even though we're using drawings," says Stanton of the process. "I've come to believe that a perfect metaphor for creating stories is an archeological dig. You pick a site where you believe your story is buried and you dig. You uncover a few bones. And from those few artifacts you extrapolate what kind of story you've uncovered But then you find a couple other bones and you're forced to rethink what you have. And if you keep digging hard enough, at some point the story tells you what it wants to be."

storyboards: **Derek Thompson, 2006, digital**

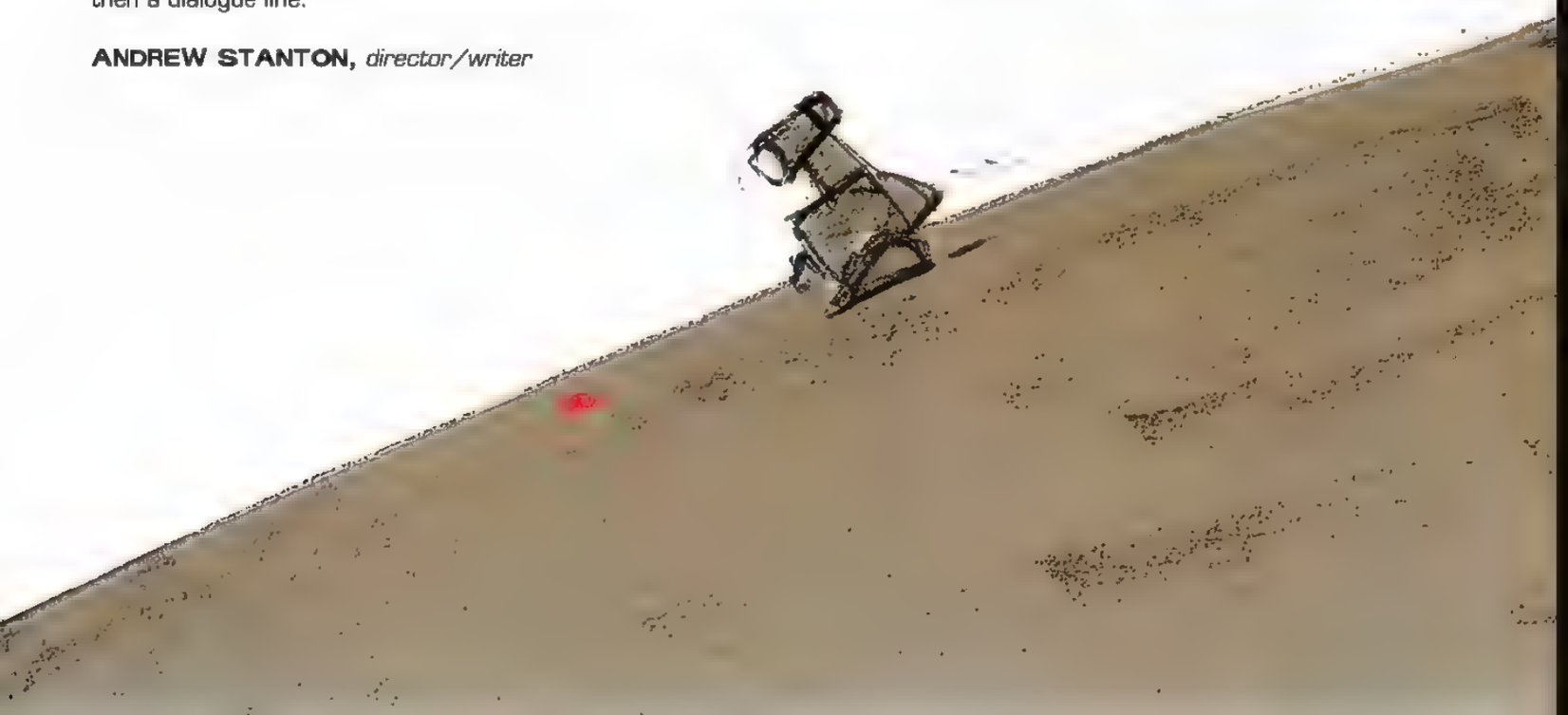
storyboards: **Ronnie del Carmen, 2004, graphite & digital**

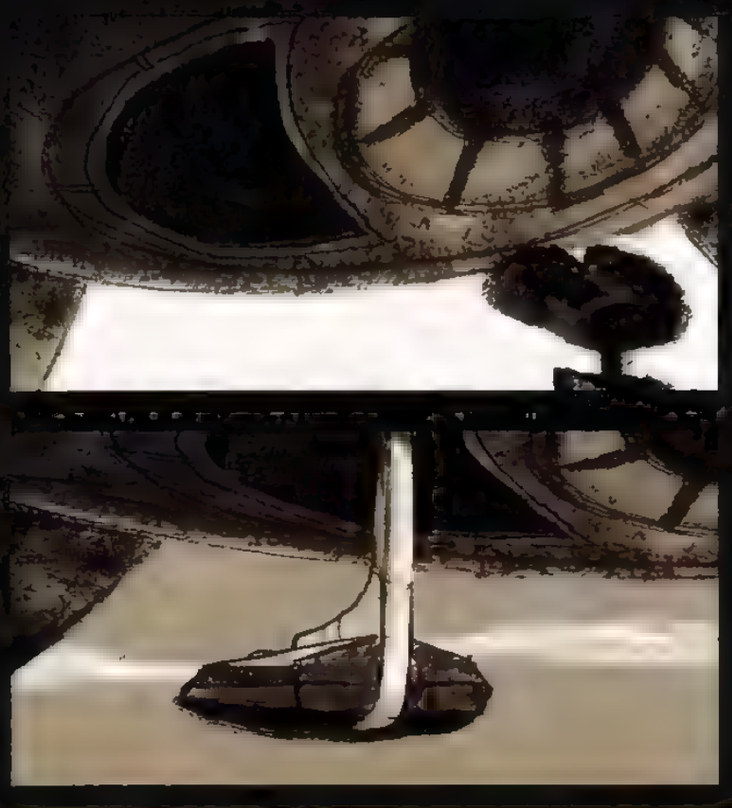




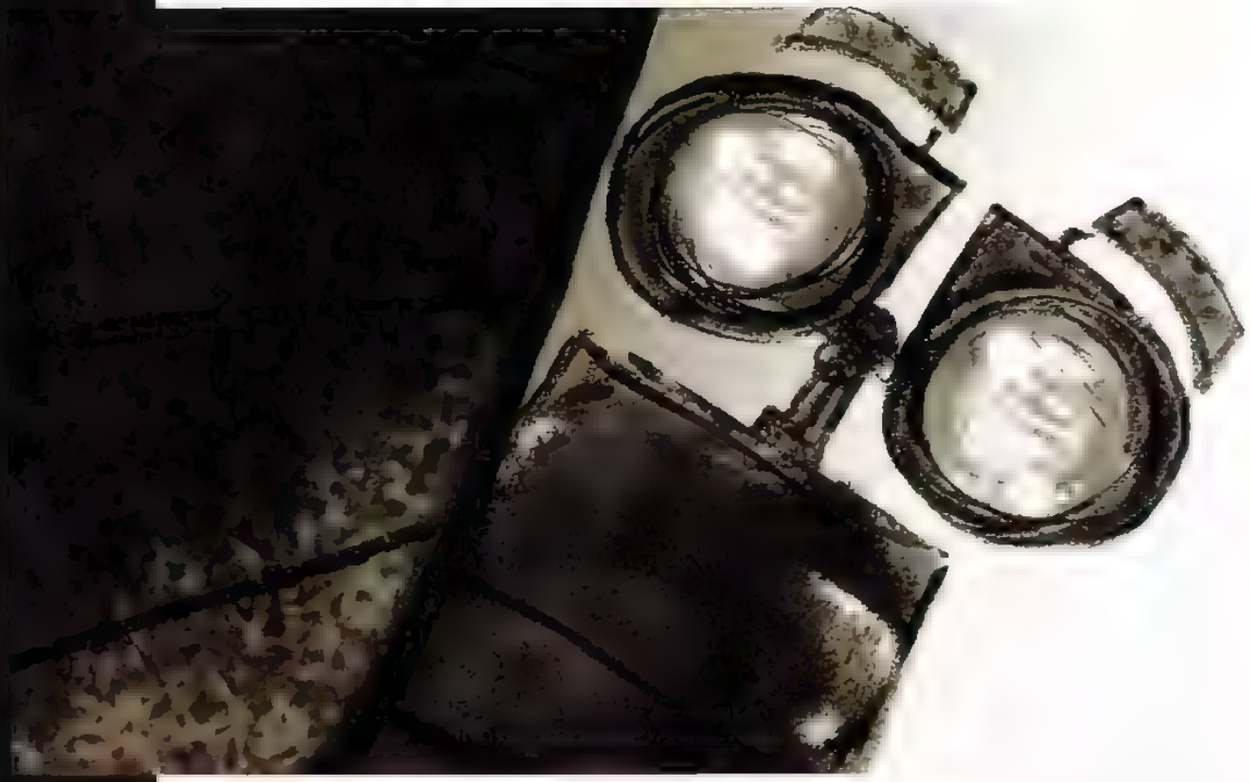
I did actually have a full script. But before I started, I wondered, "How do I write a script for no dialogue, or very little?" And then I read the script for *Alien* by Dan O'Bannon. He wrote in this prose that was made up of broken phrases, and he would actually use the formatting in a slightly fresh way to get you in the mood for these quiet beats. Your interest wasn't about reading a block of description and then a dialogue line.

ANDREW STANTON, *director/writer*

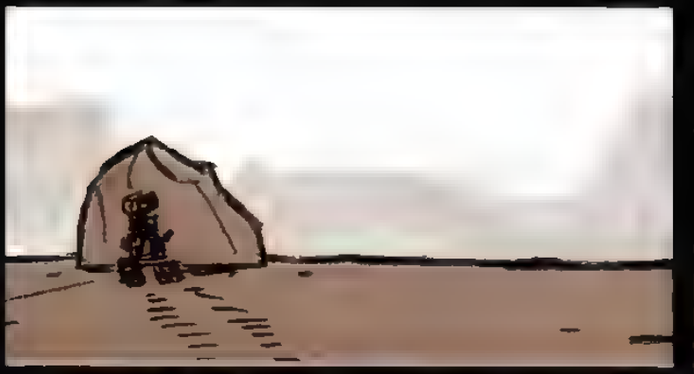


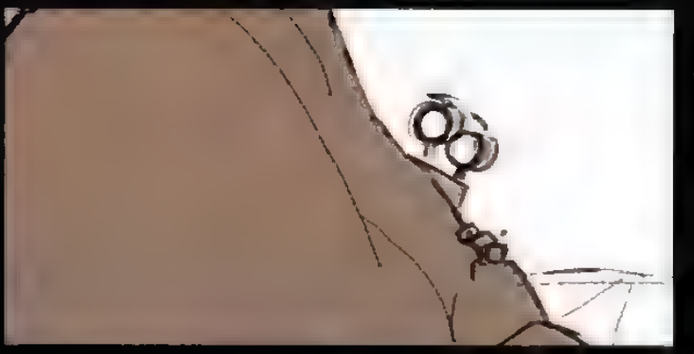


storyboards: **Max Brace, 2005, digital**



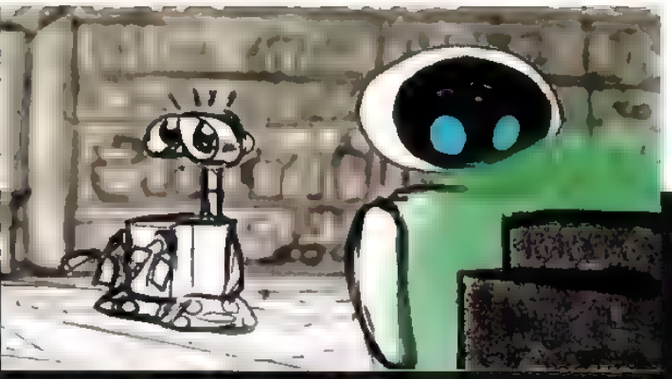
storyboards: **Ronnie del Carmen, 2004, graphite & digital**

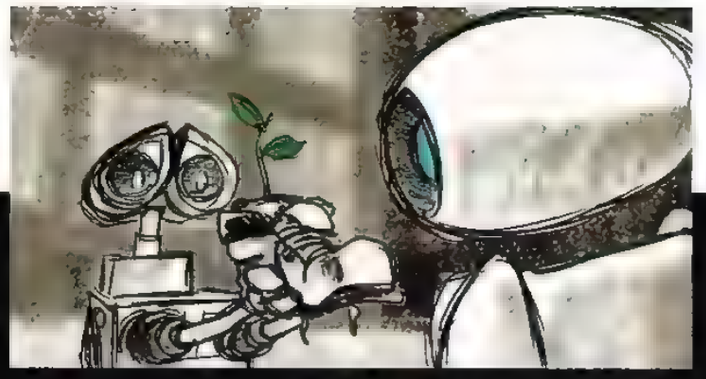


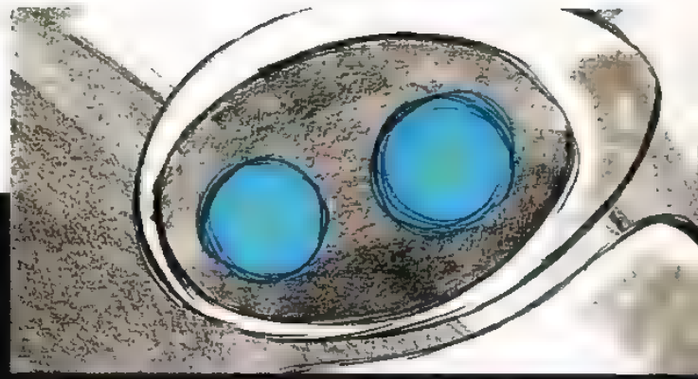


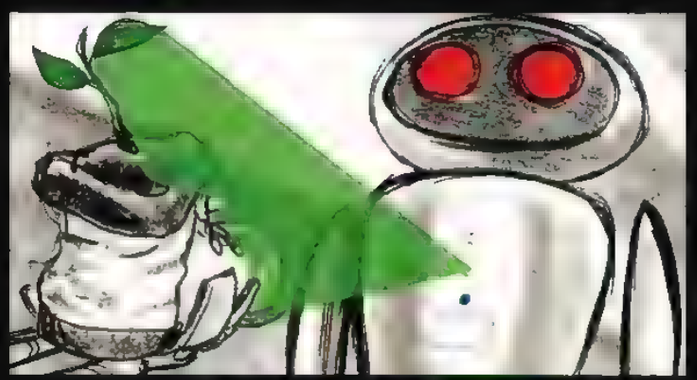
storyboards: Ronnie del Carmen, 2004, graphite & digital

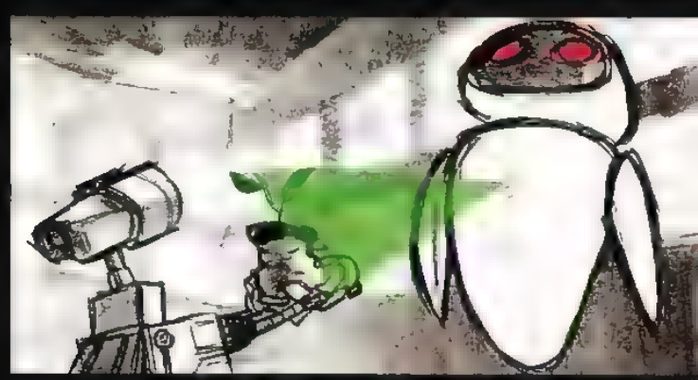
storyboards. Ronnie del Carmen, 2004, graphite & digital

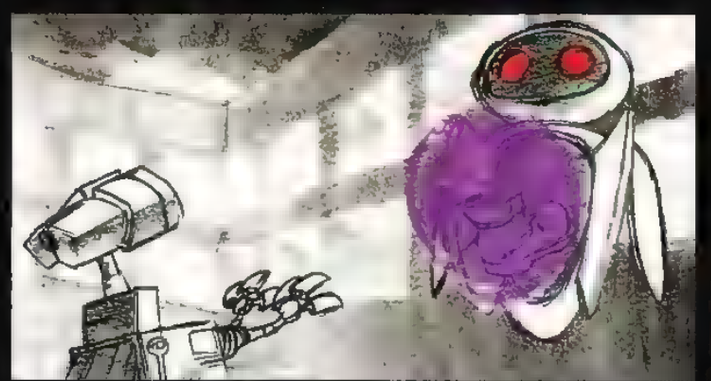


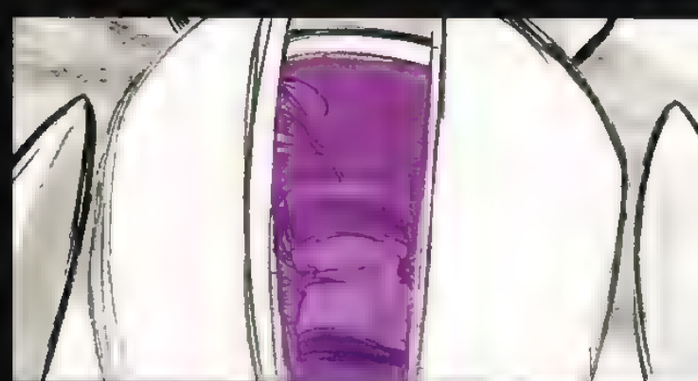






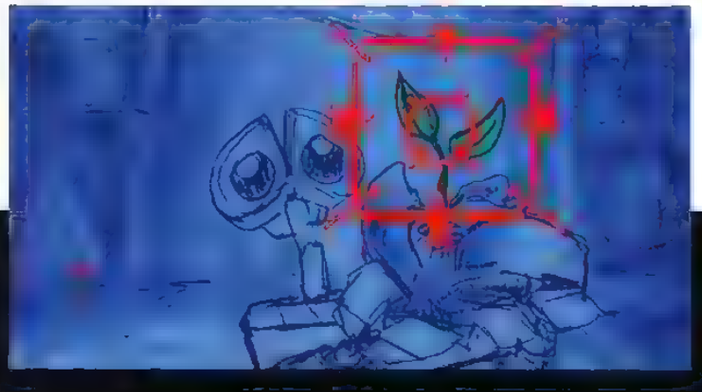


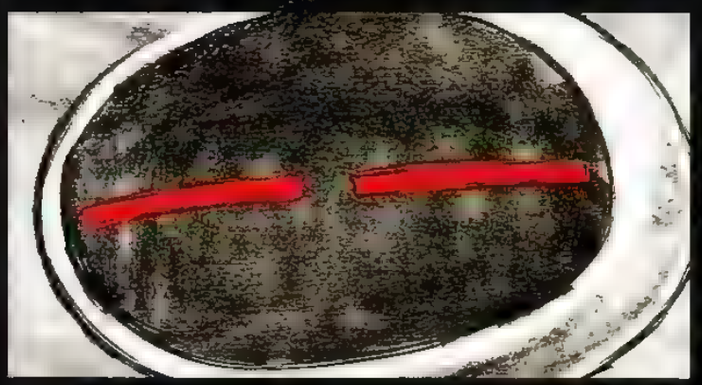


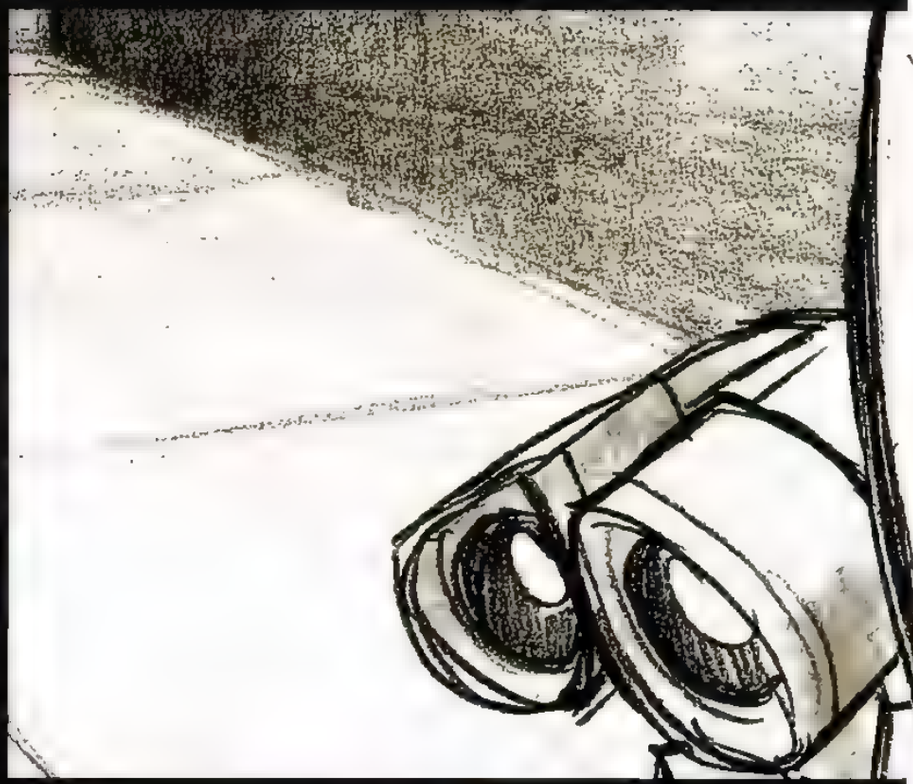


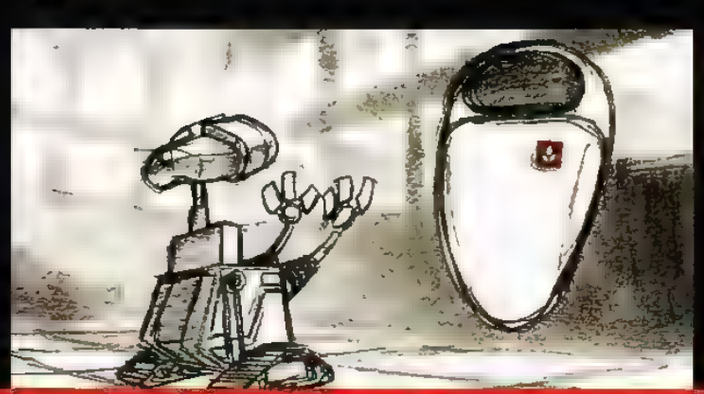
In the scene in the truck, EVE goes from hostile to "Hey, this is really a cute guy." Now she's taking in his whole world. Then, before WALL•E can get to second base, that plan shuts down. To me, that was a crucial sequence and we worked on that really hard.

JIM REARDON, *head of story/writer*

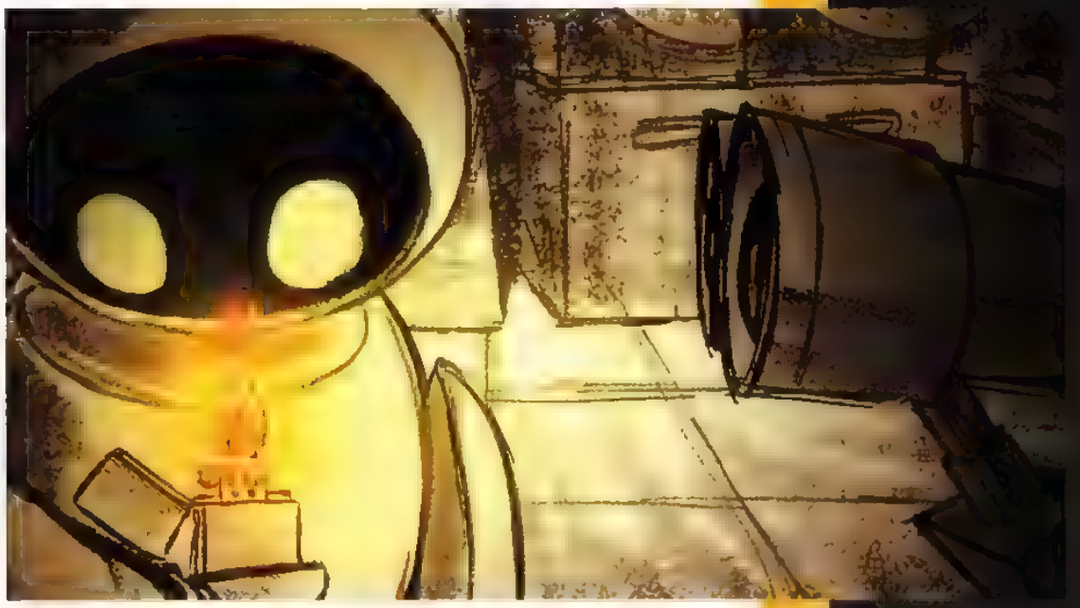








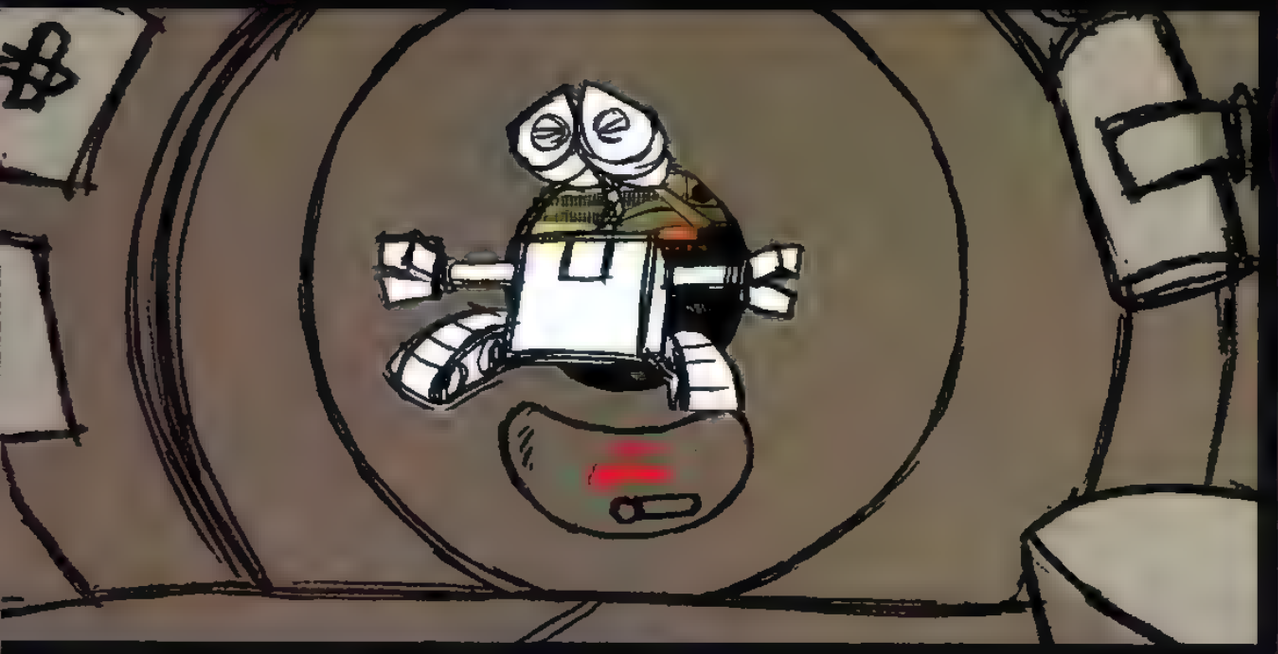
storyboards: **Max Brace & Peter Sohn, 2004, digital**

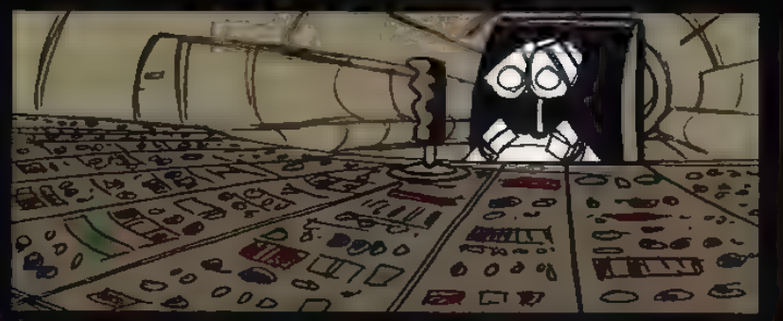


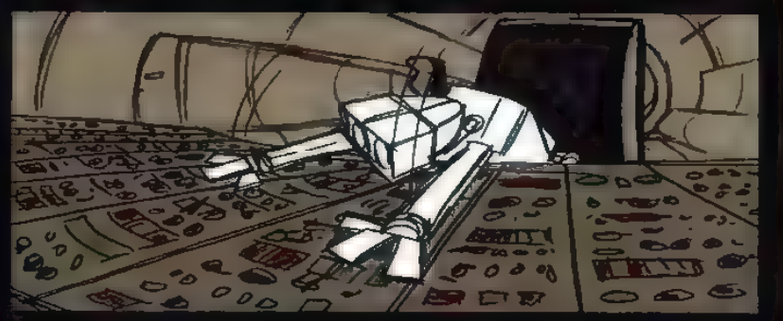
storyboard: **Max Brace & Peter Sohn, 2004, digital**

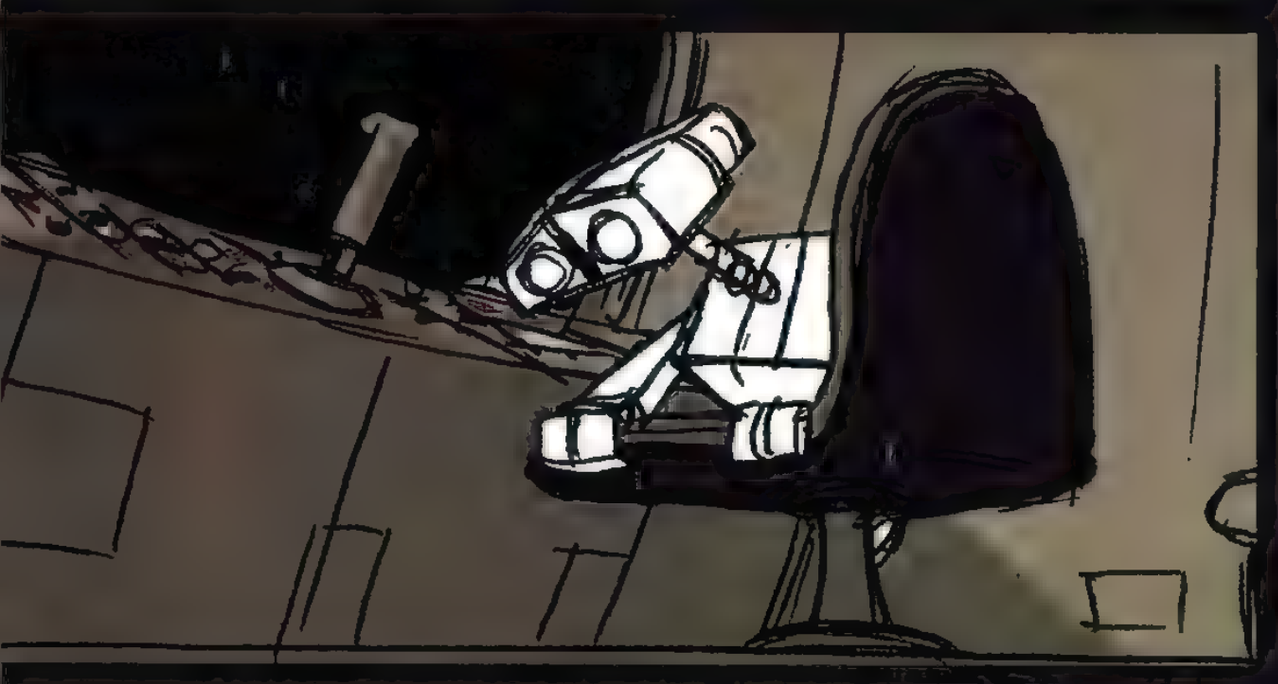
storyboards: **Max Brace & Peter Sohn, 2004, digital**

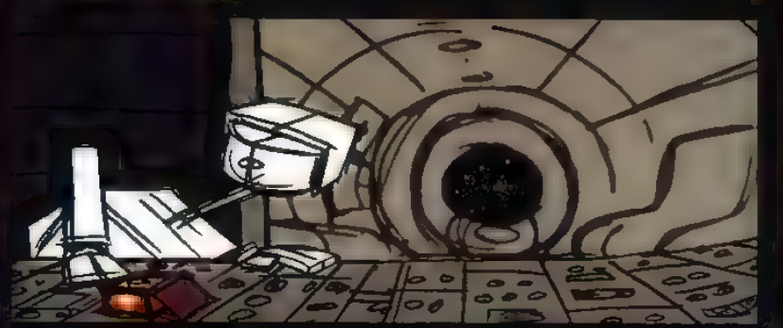
storyboard: Peter Sohn, 2004, digital

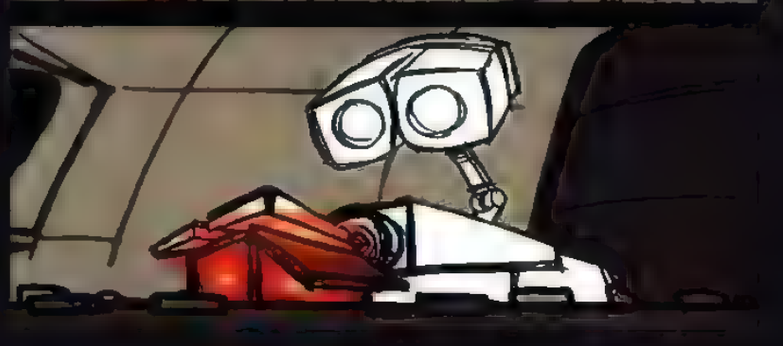






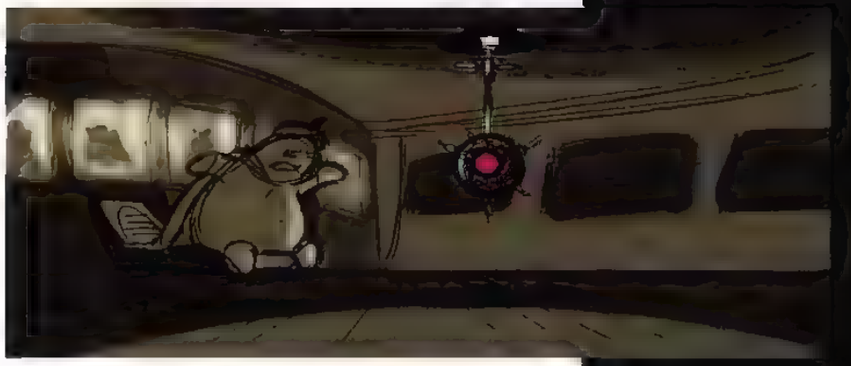


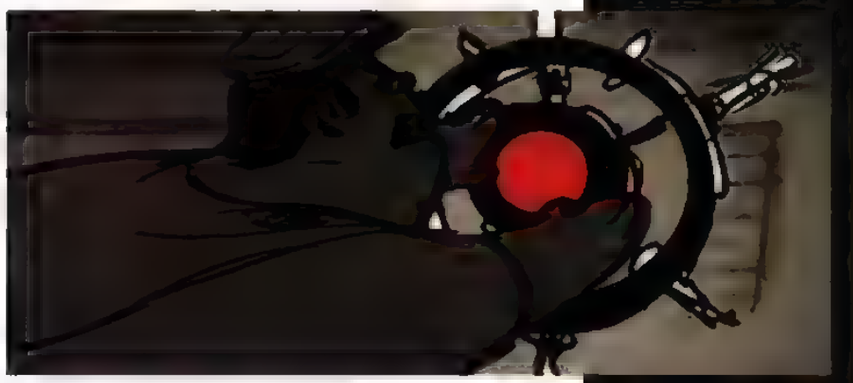




storyboards: Kevin O'Brien, 2006, digital

storyboards: **Scott Morse, 2007, digital**





No amount of the best animation in the world will ever save a bad story, or a bad story reel. But once you have a really good story reel and it's working, it will get 10 to 100 times better once it's animated and in color.

JOHN LASSETER, *executive producer*

storyboard: **Brian Fee, 2007, digital**

storyboards: Kevin O'Brien & Scott Morse, 2006, digital

That's the crux of the picture. Are you just going to follow your programming or are you going to take a chance?

JIM REARDON, *head of story/writer*

storyboard: **Kevin O'Brien, 2006, digital**

2: TRAS

PLANET

"Know your world. The more you know, the more believable your story can be," advises Andrew Stanton. His motto was doubly relevant to the art direction of *WALL•E*, as the crew was tasked with creating two opposite worlds, literally from the ground up. "We had two different sets, Earth and the spaceship, and they are really contrasting," notes art director Anthony Christov. "The Earth is completely trashy and dirty."

TRASH PLANET

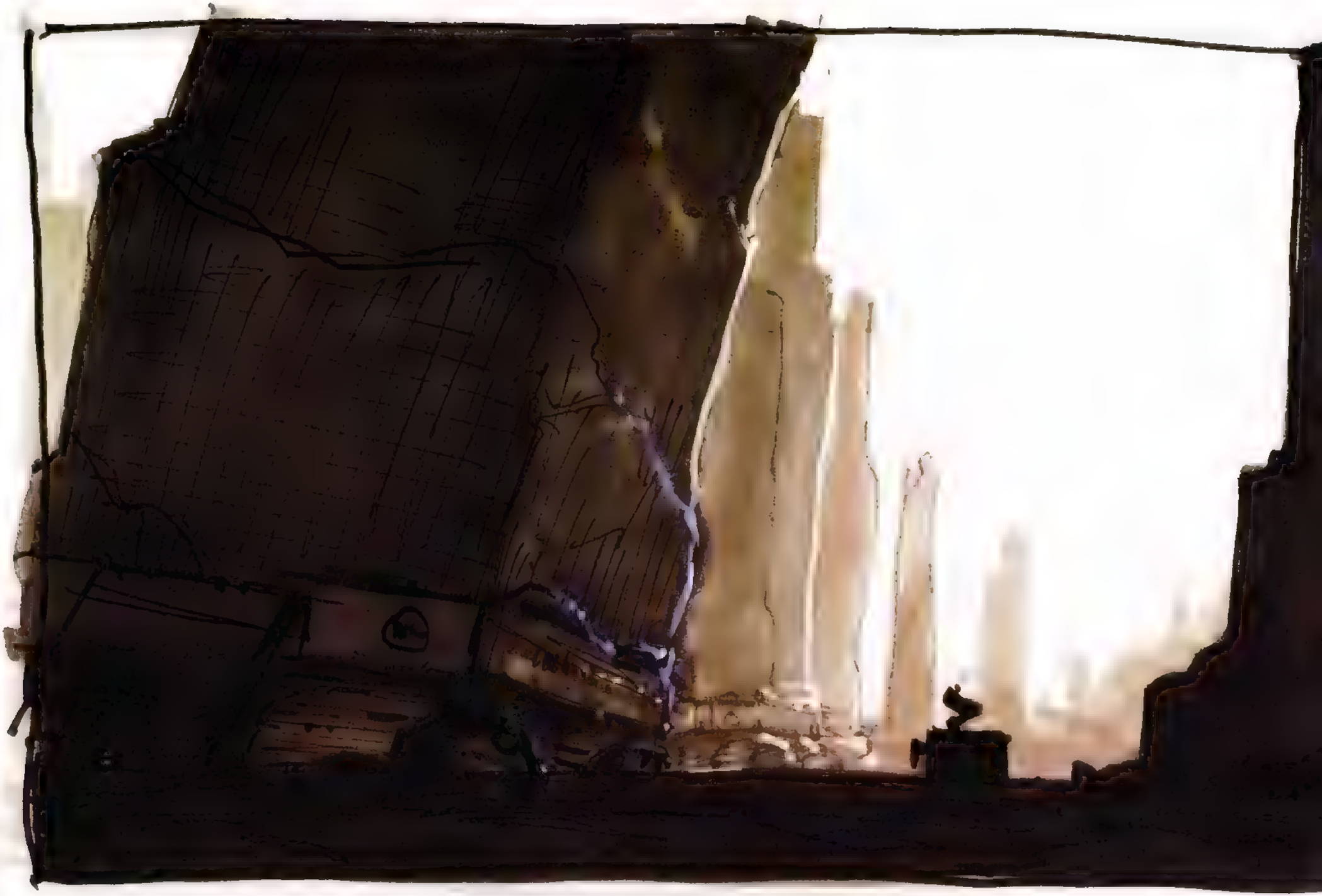
WALL•E's world is a wasteland. Beneath smoggy layers of dust and debris lie the by-products of a consumer culture gone awry. Humans have long ago left the buildings. The population moved off-world when efforts to clean up the planet failed. The towers of trash they left behind form a fortress of solitude for the little robot. "It's an apocalypse. It was potentially very ugly and gray and monochromatic. So how do you make that scene visually interesting and watchable?" asks coproducer Lindsey Collins.

"We were looking for designs that were extremely dirty, yet organized in an almost subconscious way and not offensive or repulsive. Because trash can be offensive," Christov determines. "It looks dirty, but just enough that a kid would still want to go there and play." Jim Morris agrees. "In a way, you want it to feel like a ghost town more than a dump. You don't want it to be sticky and gooey and smelly and messy. In the story, it's been so long since the people left that everything's settled in. The icky stuff is gone."

"It was super-challenging because we had to make it recognizable as Earth and not have it look like Mars. We also had to make it look like a trashy, destroyed planet with more of a monochromatic feel," says Danielle Feinberg. "We don't see blue sky ever. A hint of it every now and again, but really, you don't see blue sky." Ralph Eggleston adds, "It took a long time to get there. Because of the palette, it was hard for us to not make it look like a desert, which would be dismal."

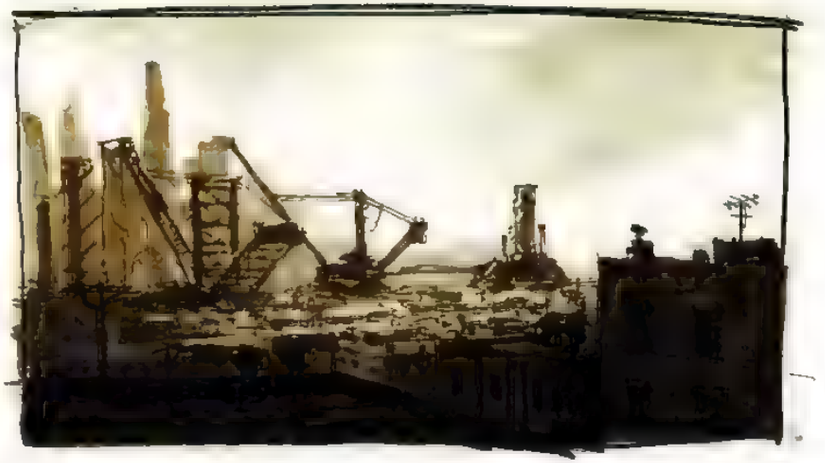
Leave it to Pixar's artists to find romance in rubbish. Noah Klocek and sketch artist Daniel Holland found the assignment an invitation to play in the mud. "Real garbage can look pretty cool," they say, smiling. "Like stacked tires. They are beautiful." Shading art director Bert Berry found a similar visual appeal in trash. "We went back to the idea of flower arranging, where you place these nice bigger shapes, and then the small. So that's what we've had to do, flower-arrange trash."

previous spread **Paul Topolos, 2006, digital** this spread **Ernesto Nemesio, 2006, digital**



Noah Klocek, 2006, pen, marker & correction fluid

Noah Klocek, 2006, pen, marker & correction fluid

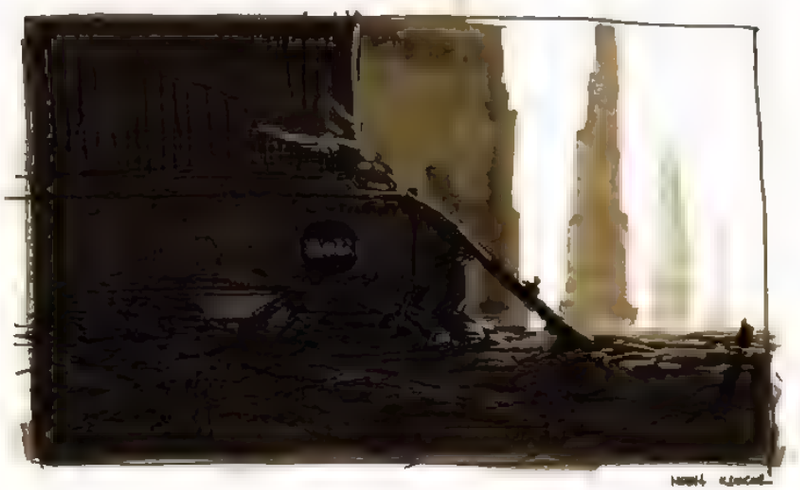


"It's the beauty of decay," declares Jeremy Lasky, "like when you go into old buildings that have been left abandoned. People have done serious photography of factories that have fallen apart. The way those shots are composed and the way they're using light to highlight certain things, you really do get the feeling of this kind of peaceful, beautiful place. A little guy in this empty, quiet world. You want to explore it."

"We did a lot of research on that," Christov says of the crew's extensive photo reference. "One of my favorites is the Chernobyl area. Everything is abandoned. Everything is leveled. It's a trash isthmus, and it's one of the few places where we have such a wide area that has just been abandoned. Nobody can live there. And that's exactly what our film world looks like."

WALL•E's wasted Earth is a blend of familiar and fantastic. Inspired by science-fiction films from the late 1960s and early '70s, Stanton wanted the audience to feel as if they had discovered an unseen gem from that era. "We researched how those films were made," says Lasky. "They were shot with anamorphic lenses. There were certain ways that those cameras would work. Then we updated that look where possible to make it feel like a modern film, but preserving some of the visual style that is in the back of your mind when you look at *Close Encounters* or *2001*."

"While it's not slavishly photorealistic, it's definitely tipped in that direction," notes Morris. "It is a science-fiction movie at heart and I think it's a different sort of film for Pixar in that regard, in that the whole look of it is intended to feel filmed instead of recorded."



Noah Klocek, 2006, pen, marker & correction fluid

Still, Pixar is not in the business of re-creating reality, but in making fantasy seem real. Visual storytelling is the ability to see worlds of wonder through an artist's eye. And an artist-driven film is by nature interpretive, not realistic.

The real challenge for me was 'Okay, how do you do that and also strive to maintain a sense of whimsy?' " says Eggleston. "I didn't want it to be realistic. I wanted it to be better than real."

John Lee, 2006, digital

Glenn Kim & John Lee, 2006, digital

That same balance of artifice and authenticity was critical to character design. With a robot designed to work as a bulldozer and a forklift, realistic mechanical parts would be needed to substitute for human body parts and facial features—anthropomorphic eyebrows and lashes would never do. From his rack-focus lens eyes to tracked arms for elbows, WALL•E became a plausibly impossible creation.

"Andrew always said, 'We don't want C-3PO; we want R2-D2,'" recalls Holland of their utilitarian approach. These would not be men in robot suits, but personalities crafted from their functional mechanical qualities. "An appliance was built to do a job," agrees animator Steve Hunter. "In *Brave Little Toaster*, the toaster could bounce around and had a little face on it, but in this movie it would just sit there and toast. That's his job."

"We went straight to the source. We went to Jet Propulsion Laboratories, which was amazing," recalls character art director Jason Deamer of NASA's technological playroom, birthplace of robots designed for unmanned missions in space. "And we went to a robotic conference in Pennsylvania and looked at what was really going on in robotics."

These field trips yielded fresh personality quirks for the performers. Animators observed that industrial robots were programmed to take the most direct or efficient path to any action, a very different way of moving from that of their human counterparts. The functionality of these mechanical movements lent an air of authenticity to the final creation.

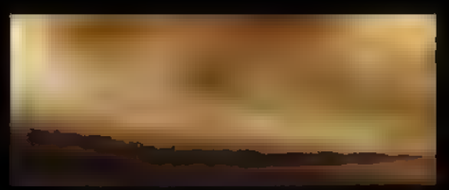
"When a character moves into animation, we look at its function. Like when you're a kid, and in your imagination you turn that can opener or wine opener into an alien or something because it has arms or whatever that you can project on to its function," says Alan Barillaro. "Function comes first, and then we read a lot of emotion into it."

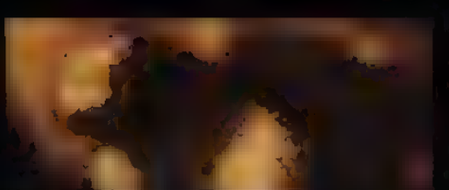
"In order for the audience to care about the characters, a degree of plausibility just has to be there," notes Christov. "With *WALL•E*, we created this world that doesn't exist. But it's so hyperrealistic that the trash and the cities seem real. It should make the audience feel that this is a place that exists and they can totally believe it's possible. A fantastic hyperrealism, which is one of Pixar's trademarks."

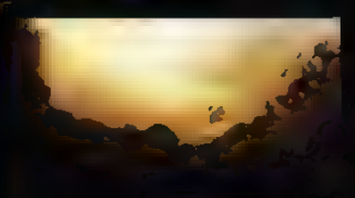
"To make the world our characters live in really believable is one of the hardest things to do, and yet, also one of the simplest," Eggleston says. "We start off with cool ideas we all like. Then we have to go all the way back to square one, think the logic through, and find ways of bringing the best of those two extremes, fantasy and believability, together. You don't have to build it all, you just have to know it all. You have to know the world."

Mark Holmes & Bert Berry, 2006, digital

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital



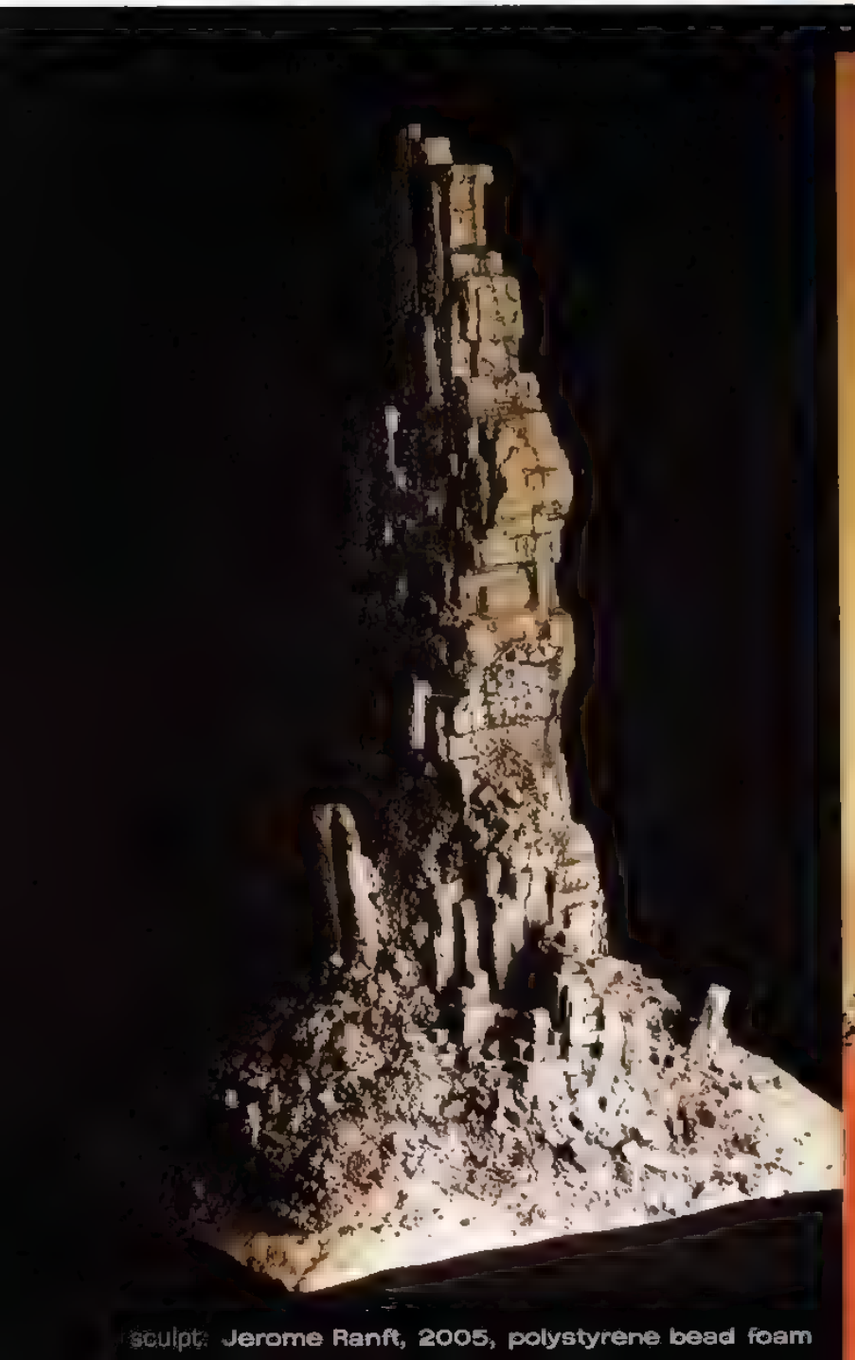




lighting studies: John Lee, 2006, digital

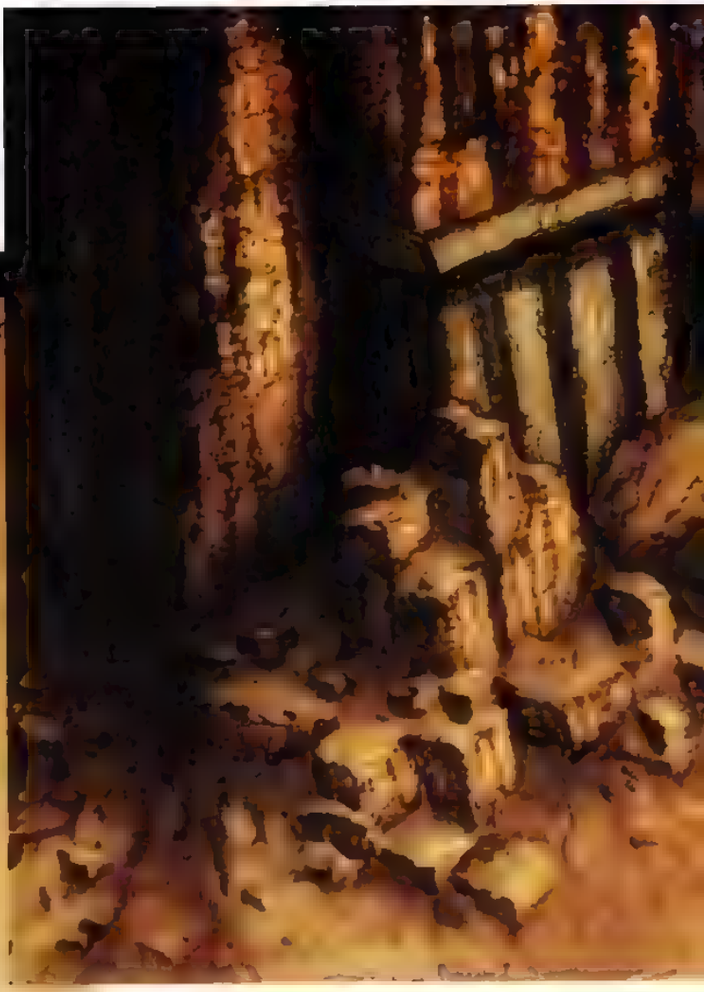
It's a much more natural light on Earth. There is a lot of color in the tan and orange range. Basically, there is no green almost anywhere. When you are outside it's mostly either bleached out or into these tans and oranges. It's a real limited palette.

DANIELLE FEINBERG, *lighting director of photography*



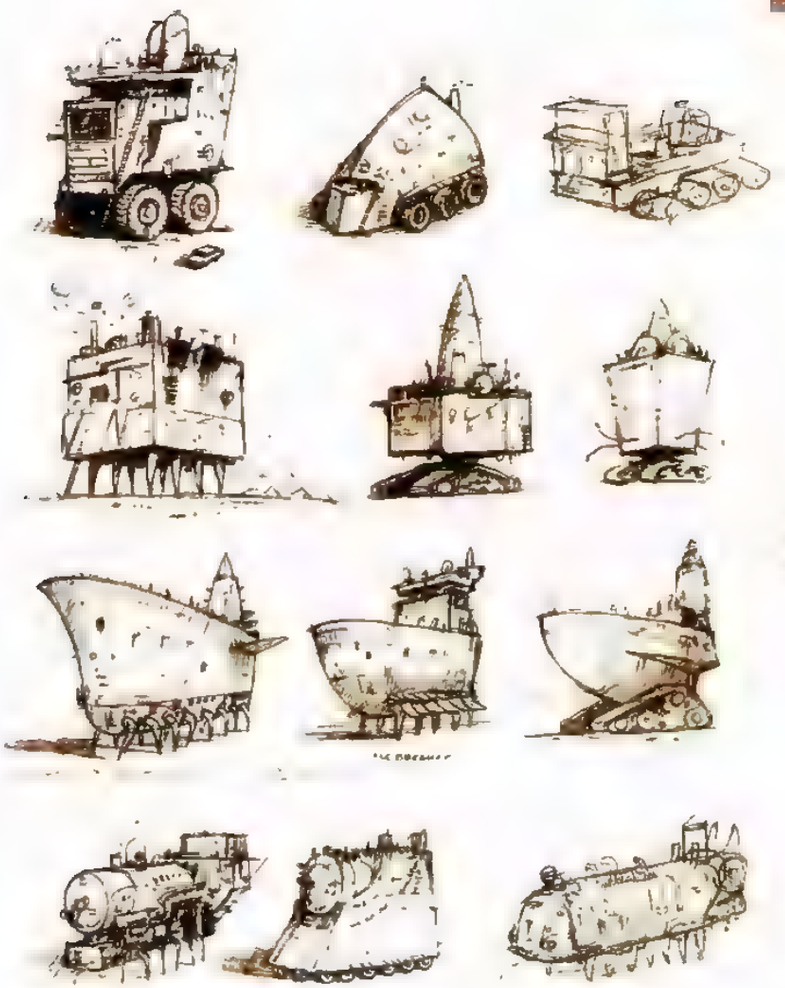
sculpt: **Jerome Ranft, 2005, polystyrene bead foam**

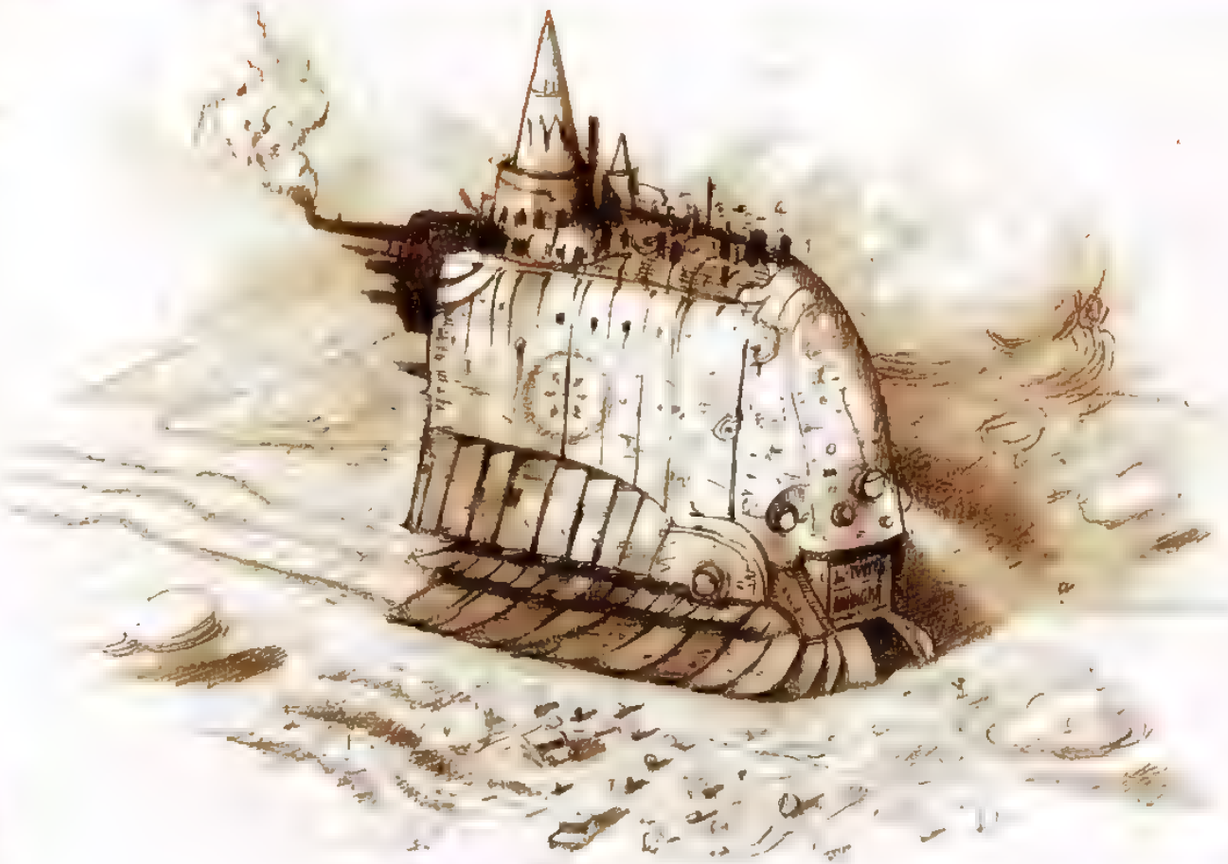
shade paint: **Laura Phillips, 2006, digital over photo of sculpt**



shade paint: **Laura Phillips, 2006, digital**

Shaun Tan, 2004, pencil & charcoal





How can you research a made-up world? You can't really. That's the rub with fantasy pictures.

ANDREW STANTON, *director/writer*

Noah Klocek, 2006, pen, marker & correction fluid

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

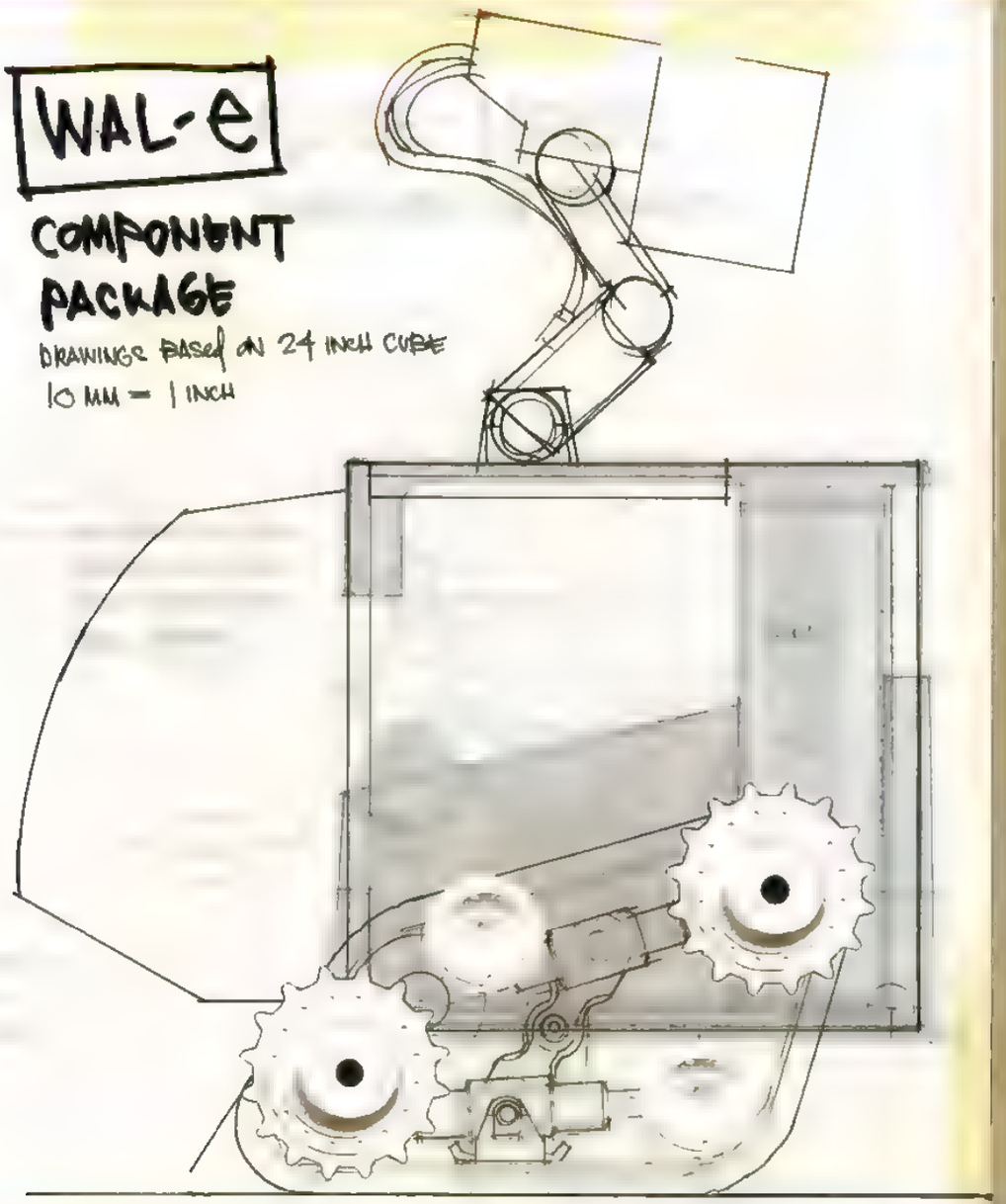
Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

WAL-E

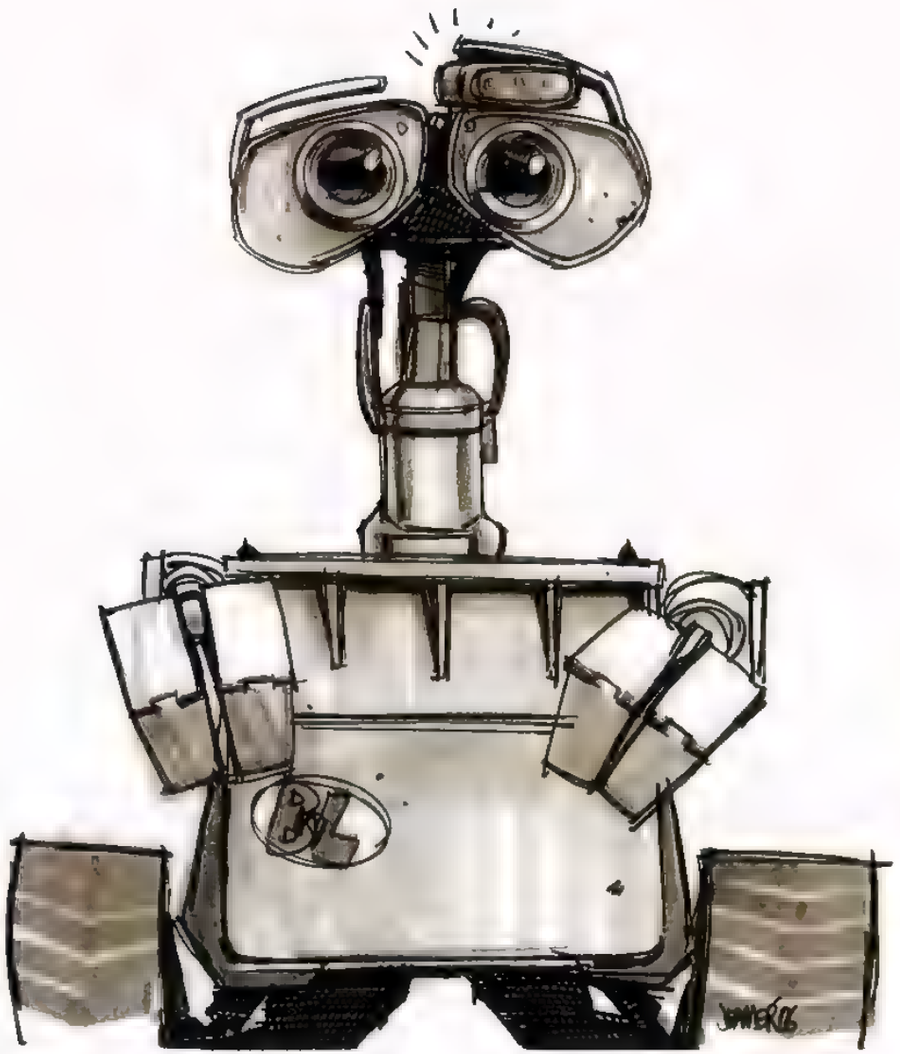
COMPONENT PACKAGE

DRAWINGS BASED ON 24 INCH CUBE
10 MM = 1 INCH

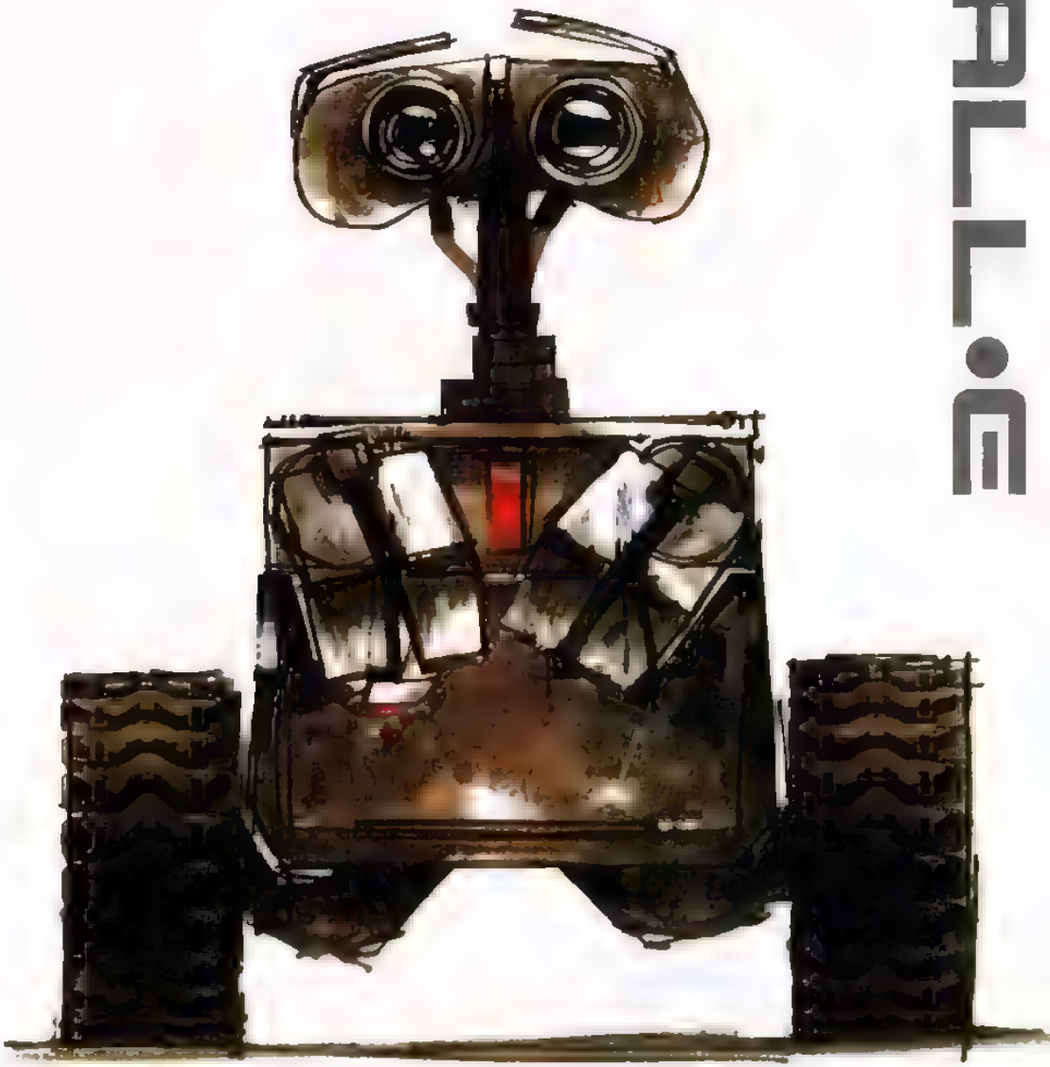


The design for WALL•E's eyes actually came from binoculars. Andrew stared at them, turned them around, and looked at them. Then he started wiggling them and he was stunned at how much expression you could get just by bending them up and down. The animators actually added little levers that come up that gave a little bit of an eyebrow expression, but they found that they didn't need it all that much. Just by taking it and bending these binocular eyes up and down, they gave it a tremendous amount of expression.

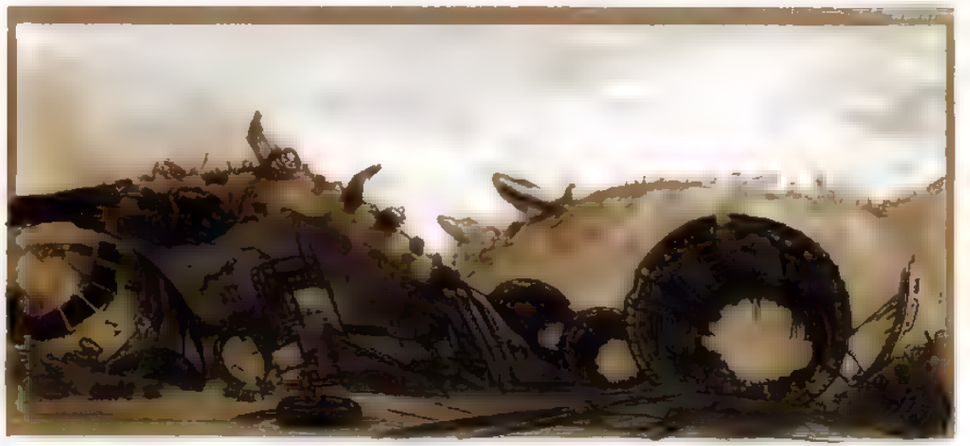
JOHN LASSETER, *executive producer*



Jason Deamer, 2006, pen & marker



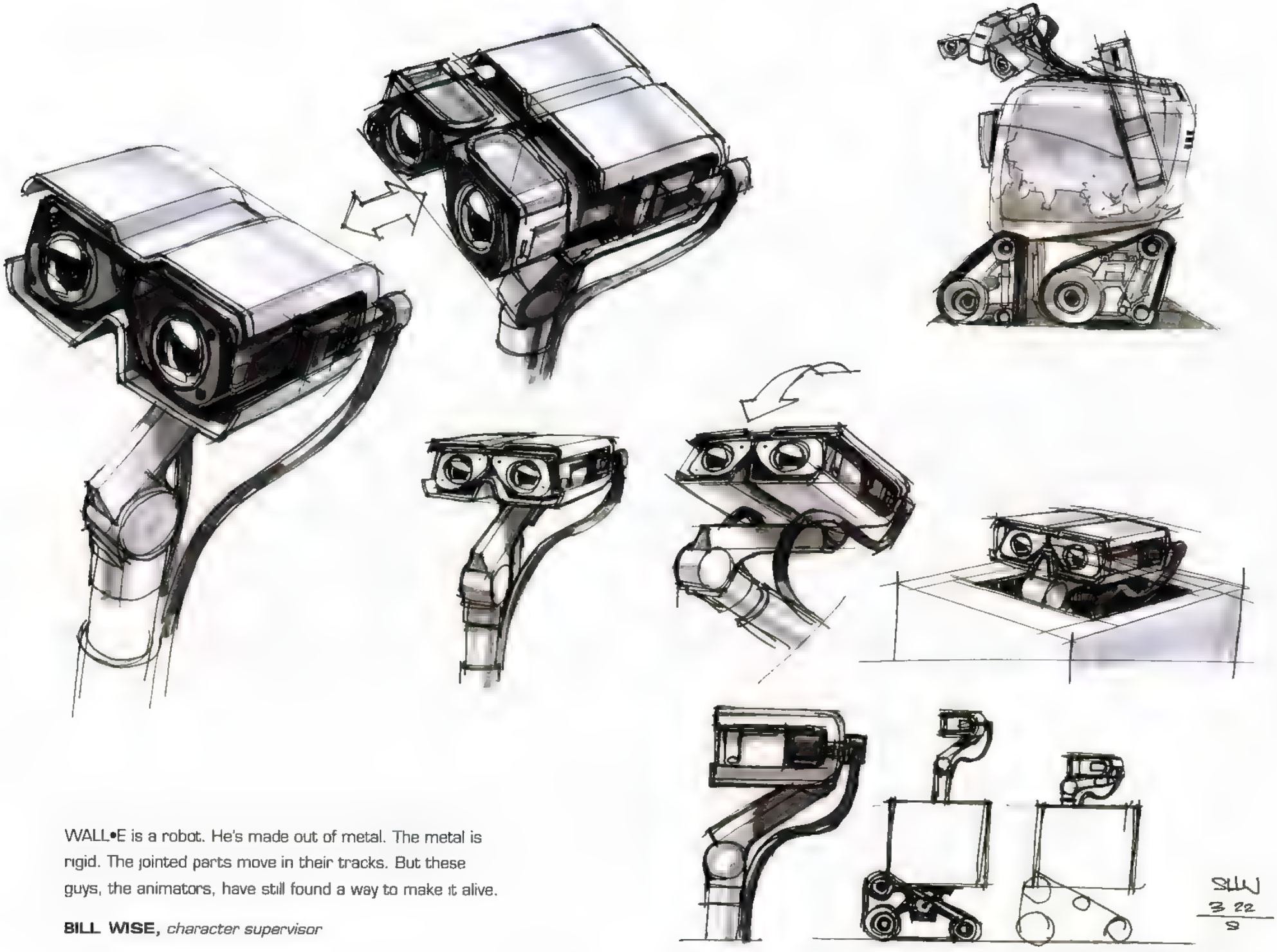
Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker



Noah Klocek, 2005, pencil

Kristian Norelius, 2006, pencil

Colorscripts. Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital



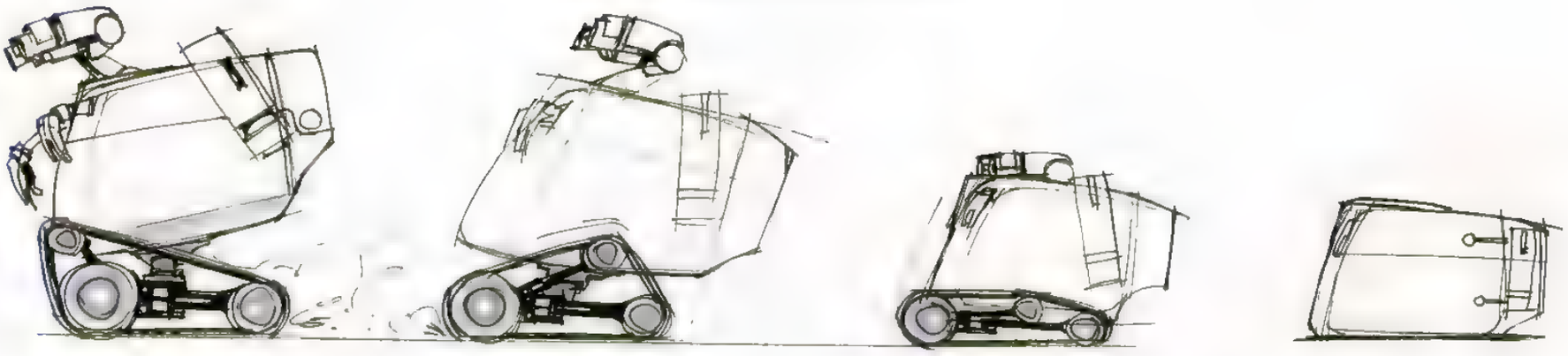
WALL•E is a robot. He's made out of metal. The metal is rigid. The jointed parts move in their tracks. But these guys, the animators, have still found a way to make it alive.

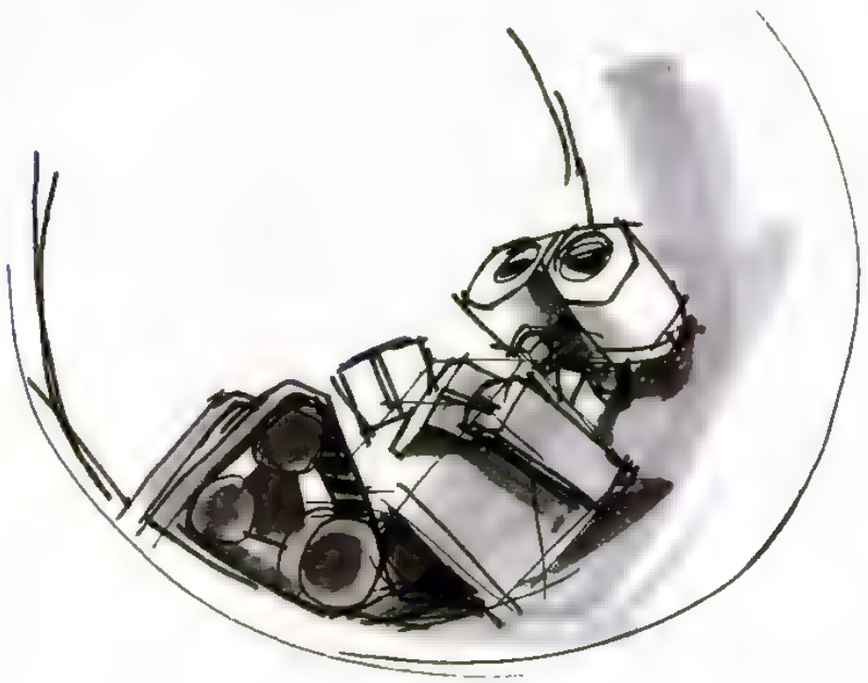
BILL WISE, *character supervisor*

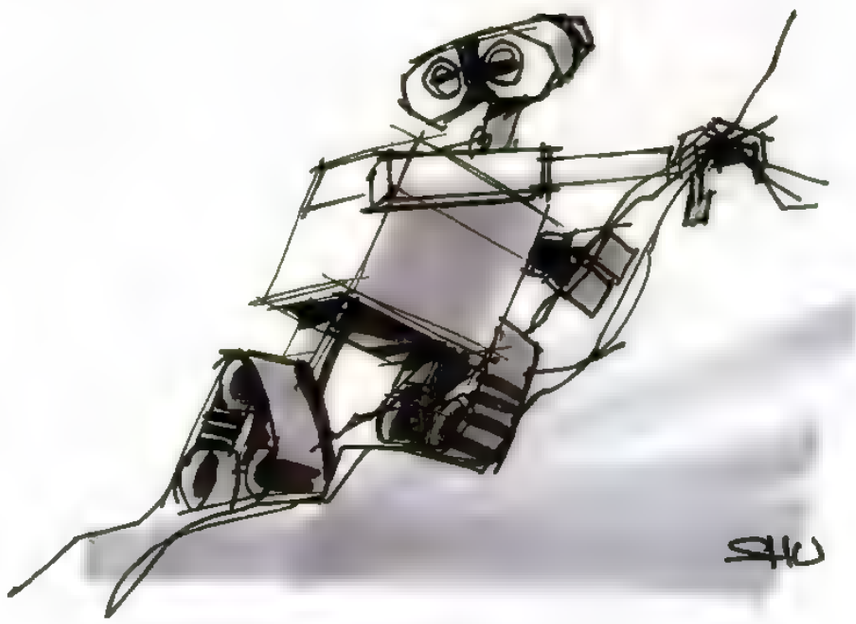
Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

Everybody in this building was influenced by *Star Wars*. That was Andrew's inspiration. He said, "I want to do 'R2-D2: The Movie.'" Because he loved R2-D2 so much, he wanted to do a movie with a character like that who doesn't speak.

JIM REARDON, *head of story/writer*







Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

graphics: **Ellen Moon Lee, 2006, digital**

graphics: **Susan Bradley, 2007, digital**

graphics: **Ellen Moon Lee, 2006, digital**

graphics: **Mark Holmes, 2006, digital**

graphic: **Mark Holmes, 2007, digital**

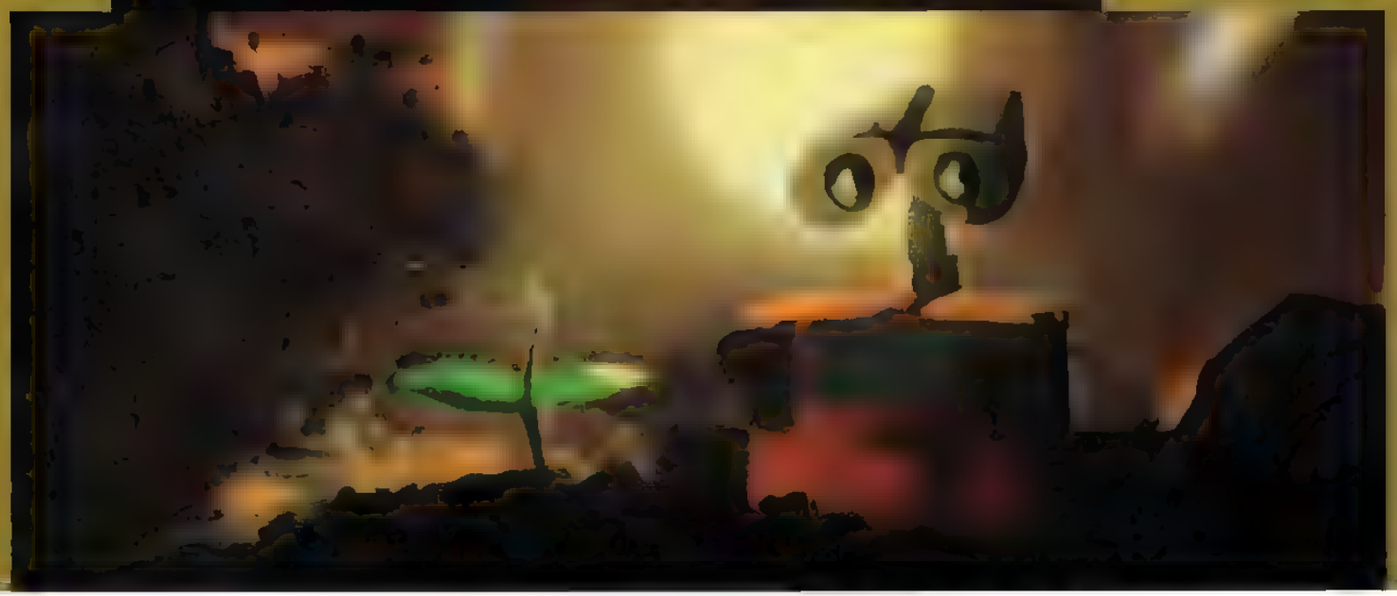
graphic: **Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker**

graphic: **Craig Foster & Mark Holmes, 2006, digital; layout by Daniel Arriaga**

Bill Cone & Ralph Eggleston, 2006, digital

graphic: **Mark Holmes, 2007, digital**

shade paint: **Laura Phillips, 2006, digital**



In all honesty, the key image for me in *WALL•E* has been the image of a small plant struggling to grow out of the trash. It's actually what I've used to re-center myself when I'm lost in story land.

ANDREW STANTON, *director/writer*

lighting studies: **John Lee, 2006, digital**

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

You don't have to build it all.

you just have to know it all.

You have to know the world.

RALPH EGGLESTON, *production designer*

Glenn Kim, 2005, digital; layout by Anthony Christov

WALL·E'S HOME

lighting studies: John Lee, 2006, digital

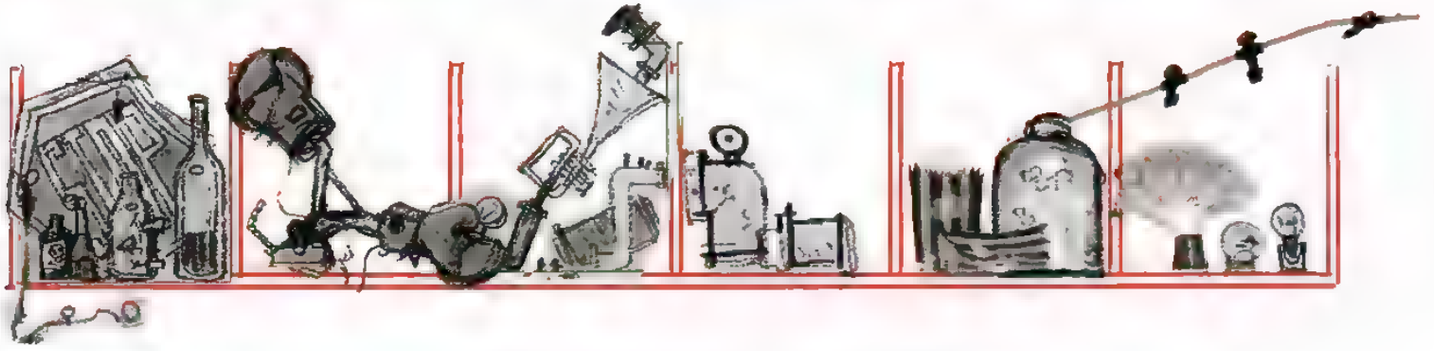
Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

Dan Holland, 2006, pen & marker

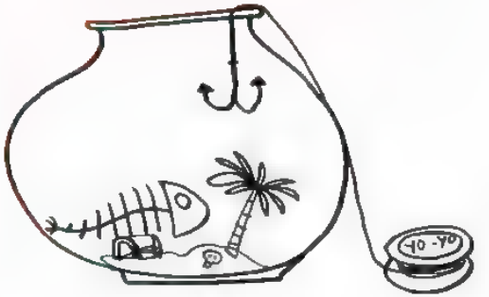
Daniel Arriaga, 2005, digital

Daniel Arriaga, 2005, pen

Daniel Arriaga, 2005, digital

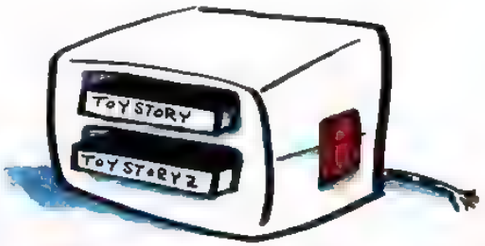


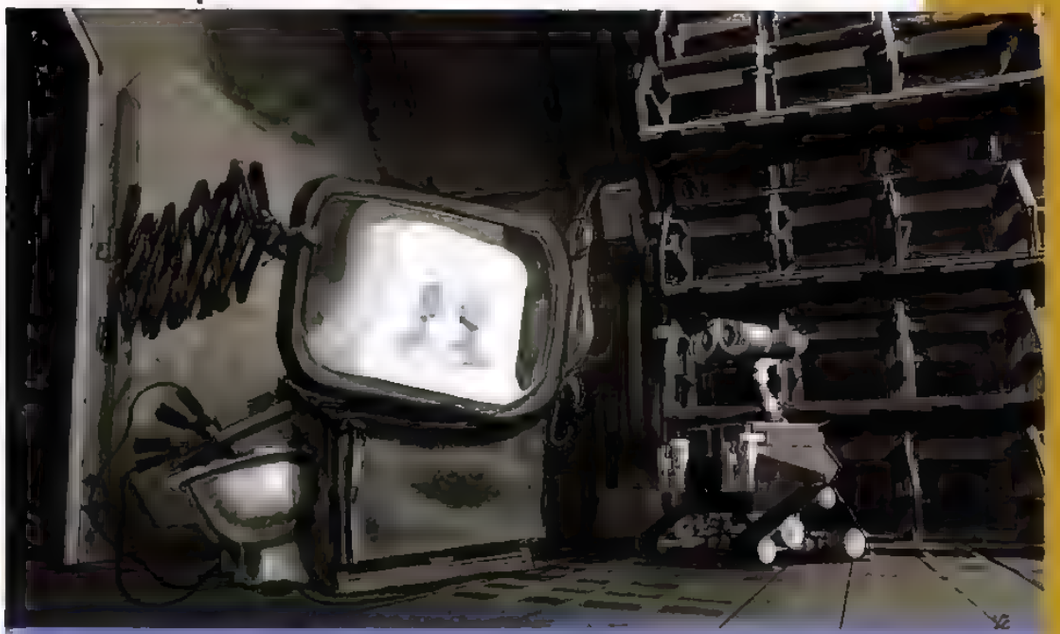
Jennifer Chang, 2006, pencil & digital



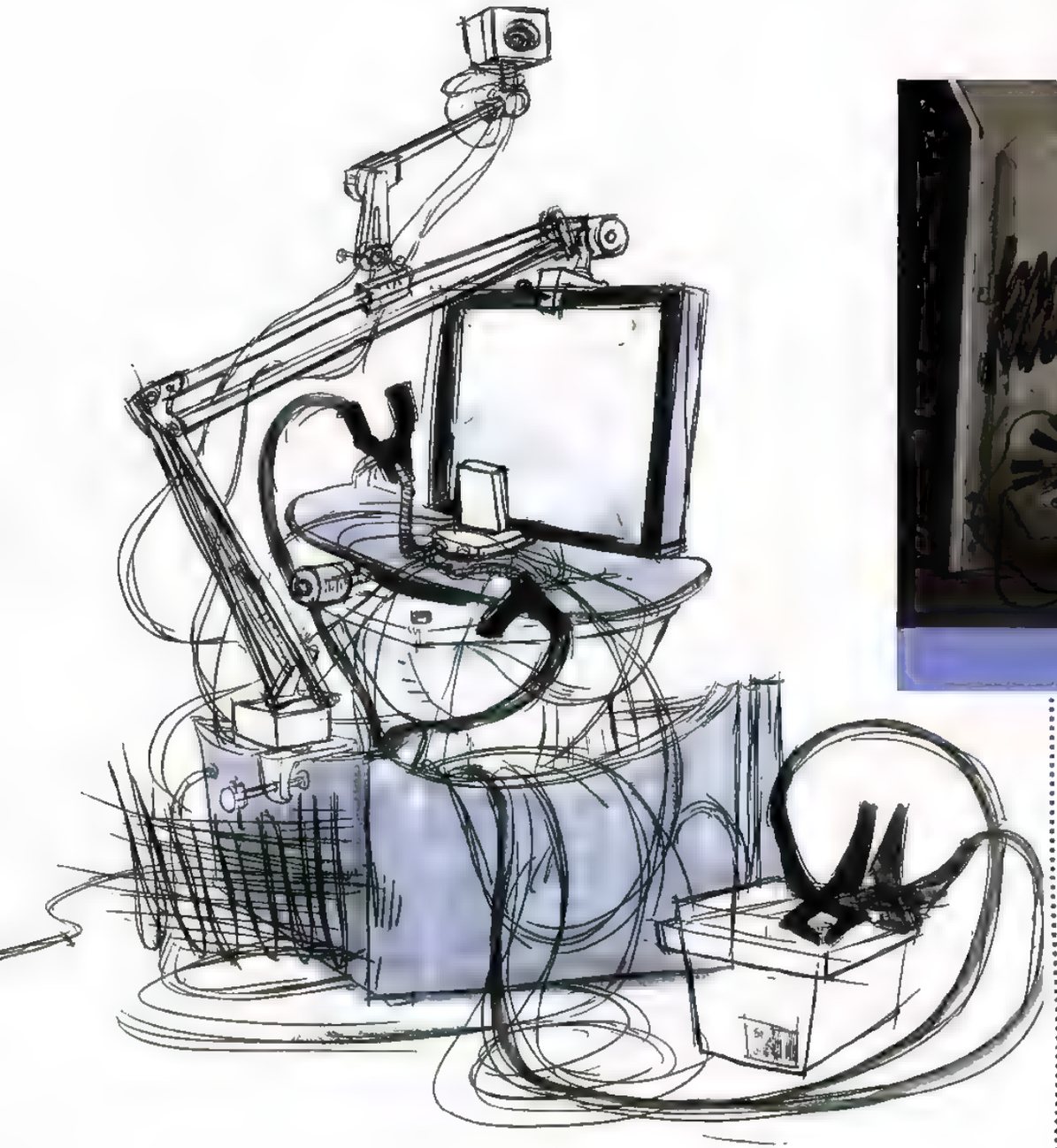
Daniel Arriaga, 2005, pen

Teddy Newton, 2005, marker





Jennifer Chang, 2005, digital

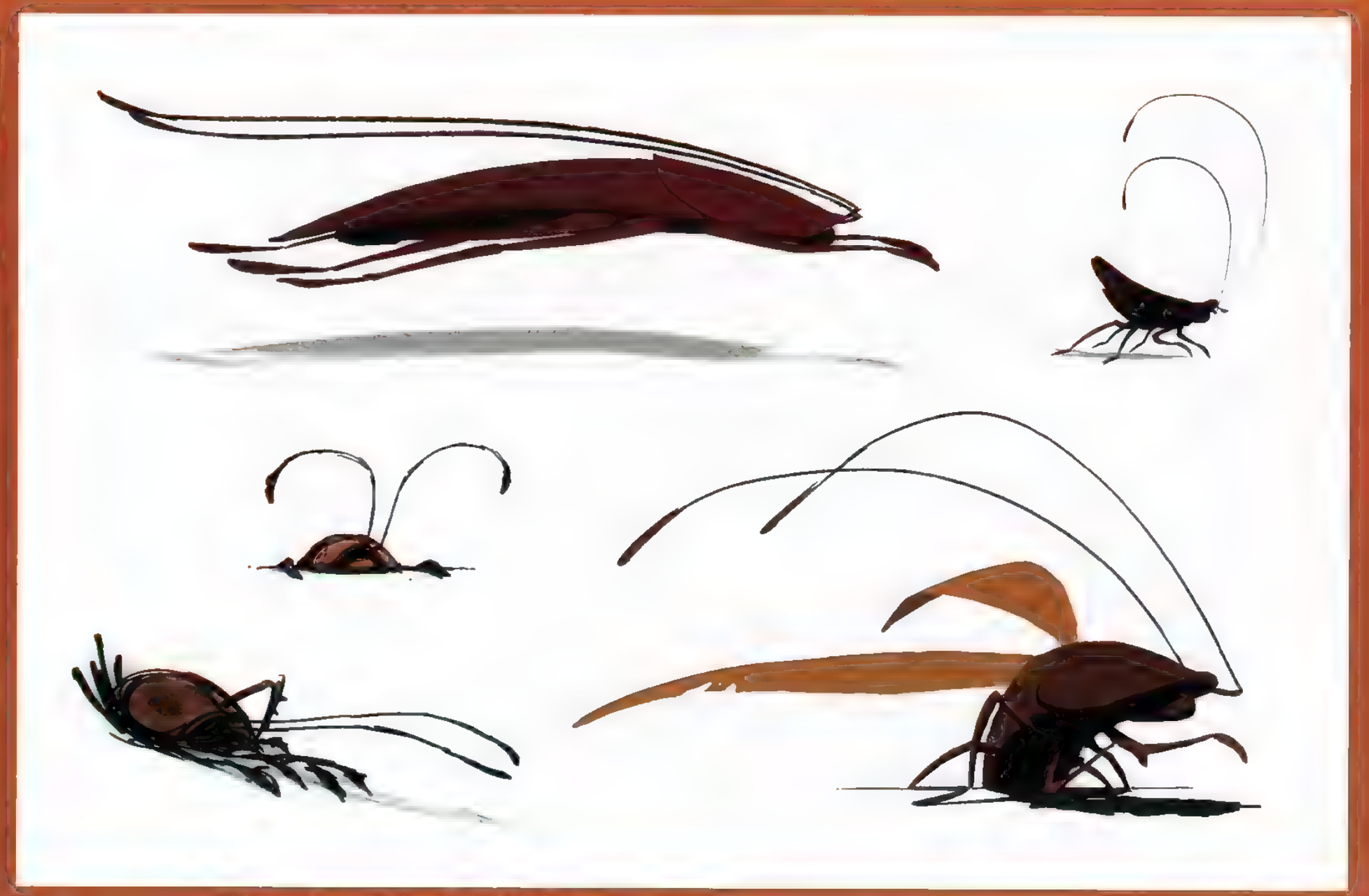


Jennifer Chang, 2005, pencil & marker

WALL•E is getting his humanity from *Hello, Dolly!* They are singing and dancing and interacting and holding hands. The "gelatins" don't have any of that. They don't interact. They don't talk to each other. They don't even walk around. The "gels" have even less humanity than *Hello, Dolly!*

NOAH KLOCEK, *sketch artist*

colorscripts: Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital



Jason Deamer, 2005, pen & digital

The big joke with Hal is that you can't kill a cockroach. So he gets killed a hundred times and survives every time.

JASON DEAMER, *character art director*

Jason Deamer, 2005, pen & digital

Jason Deamer, 2005, pen & digital

Jason Deamer, 2005, marker

colorscript: Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

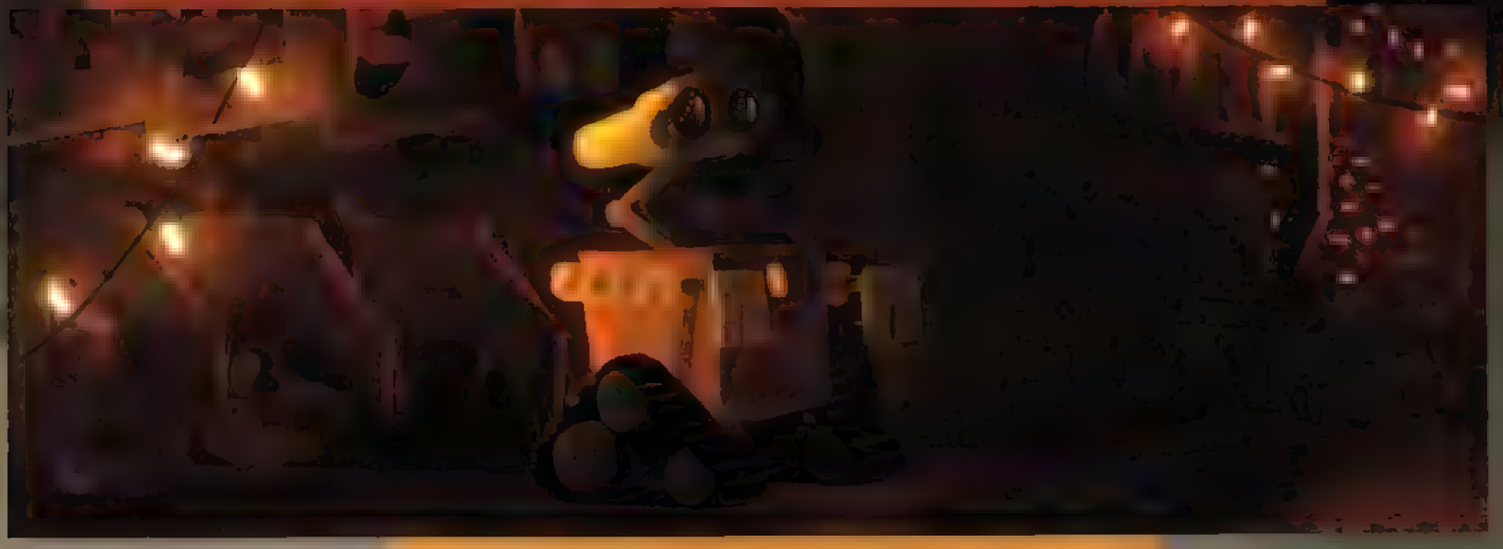
We have a scene inside WALL•E's truck where he has all his little bits that he's collected and he brings EVE there for the first time. It's this crazy set with all of this stuff in it, but we wanted it to feel really romantic. So he plugs in a cord and turns on the Christmas lights he's got strung all over and you immediately feel we're in this nice, cozy intimate interior and this is WALL•E's date night.

DANIELLE FEINBERG, *lighting director of photography*

Robert Kondo, 2005, digital

lighting study. John Lee, 2006, digital

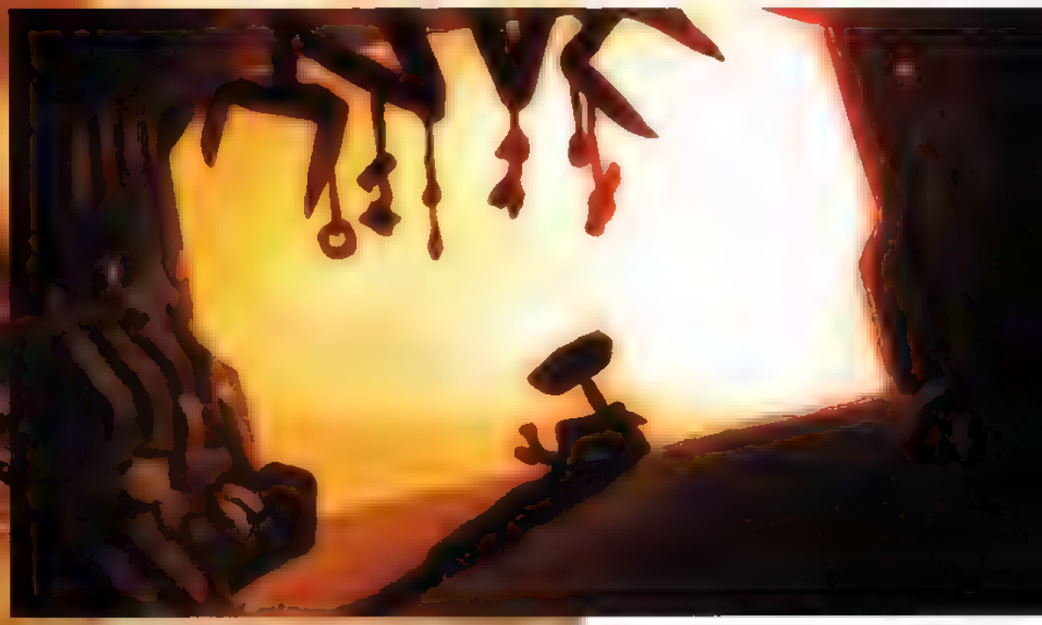
Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital



Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

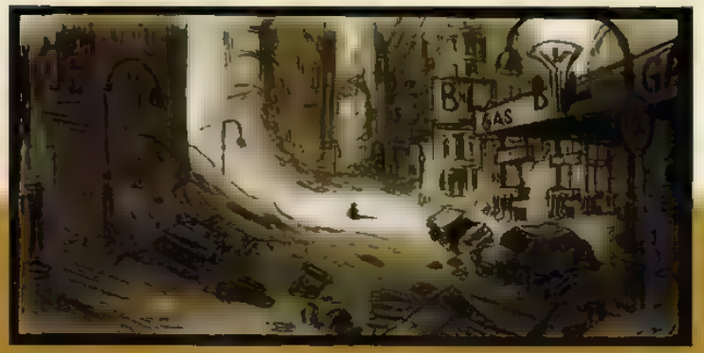
I'm from Bulgaria. The city of Sofia has a major trash problem. It's a huge issue. They don't know where to put the trash. So they moved it from one locality and then they had to move it to another and kept going and going. They ended up bringing it in a bale and stacking it in piles. That's exactly what we're doing on *WALL•E*, having him stack the trash, the cubes, one on top of the other. They had pictures of it on the online news from Bulgaria. Reality is stranger than fiction

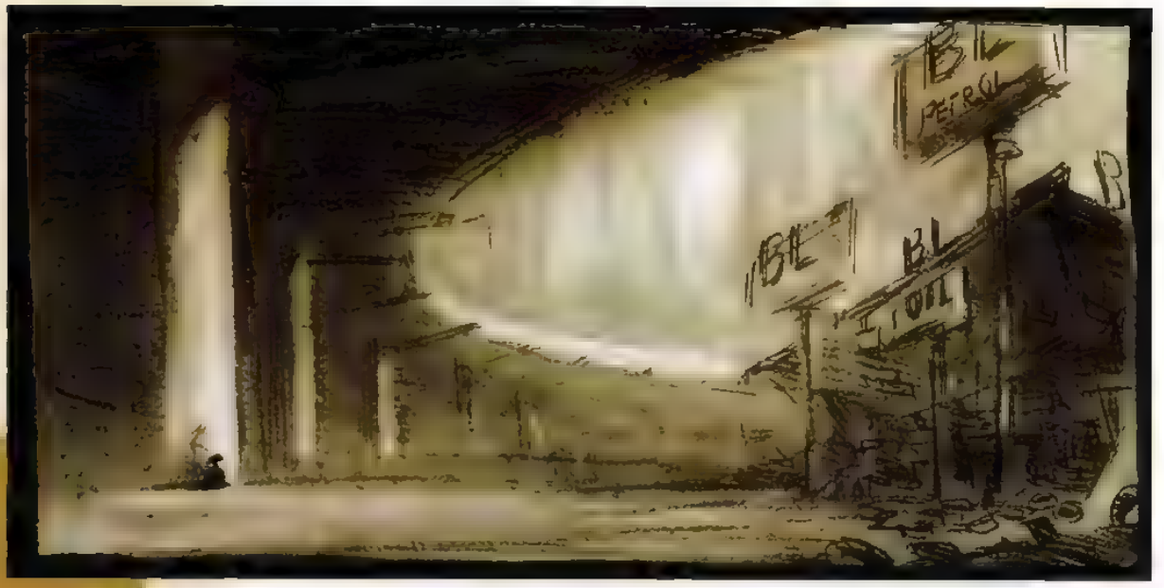
ANTHONY CHRISTOV, *art director*



John Lee, 2006, digital

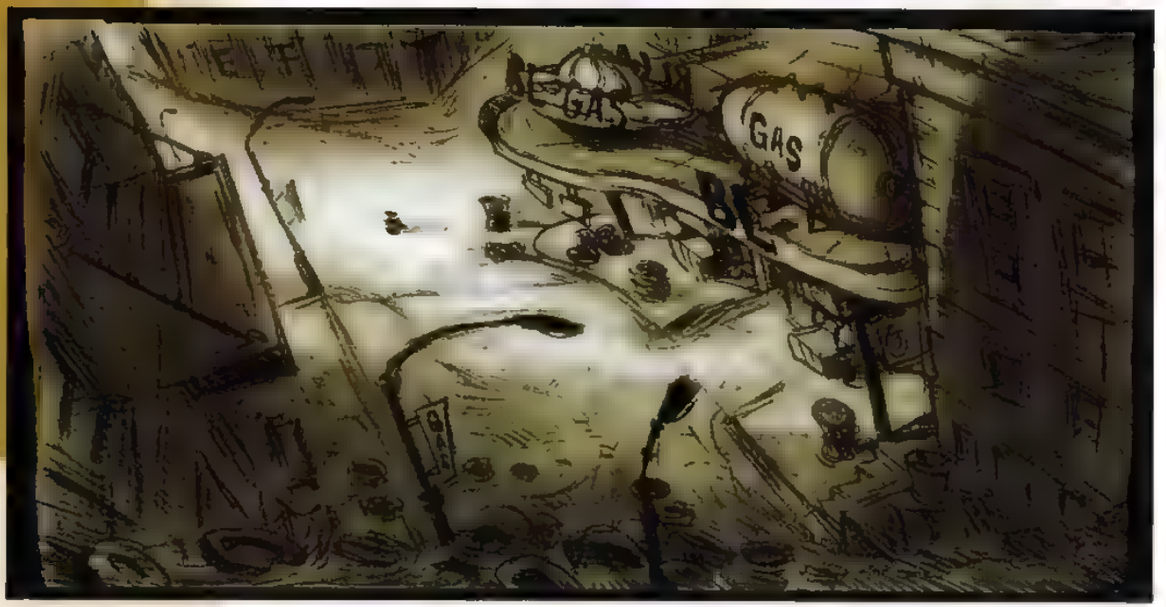
Ralph Eggleston, 2006, digital

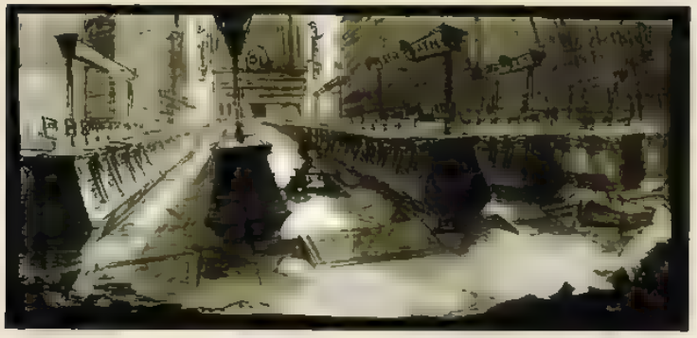


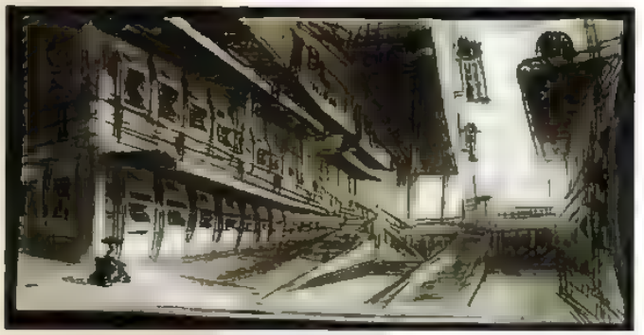


the most complicated, largest series of ten sets. Any one

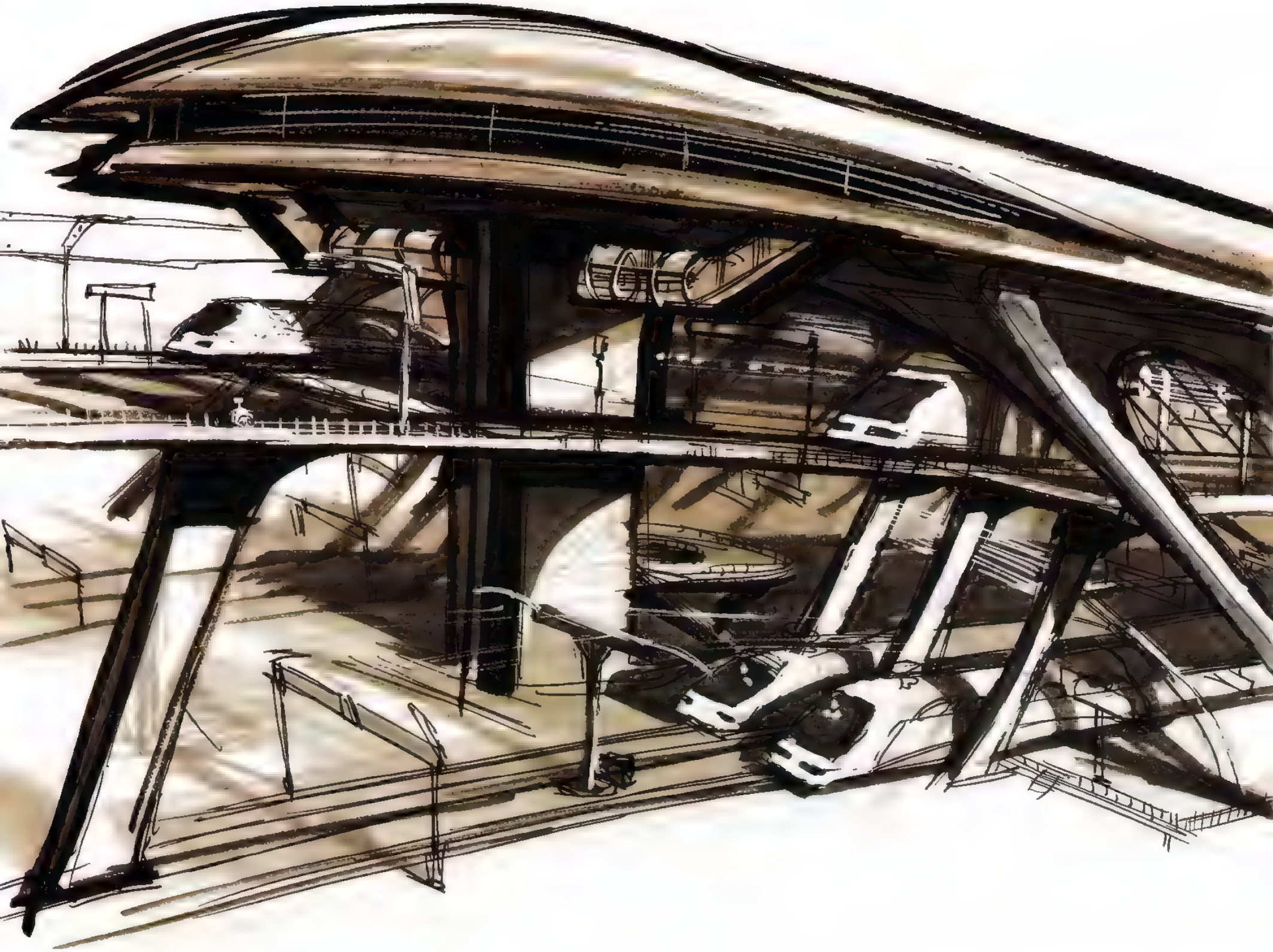
RALPH EGGLESTON, *production designer*





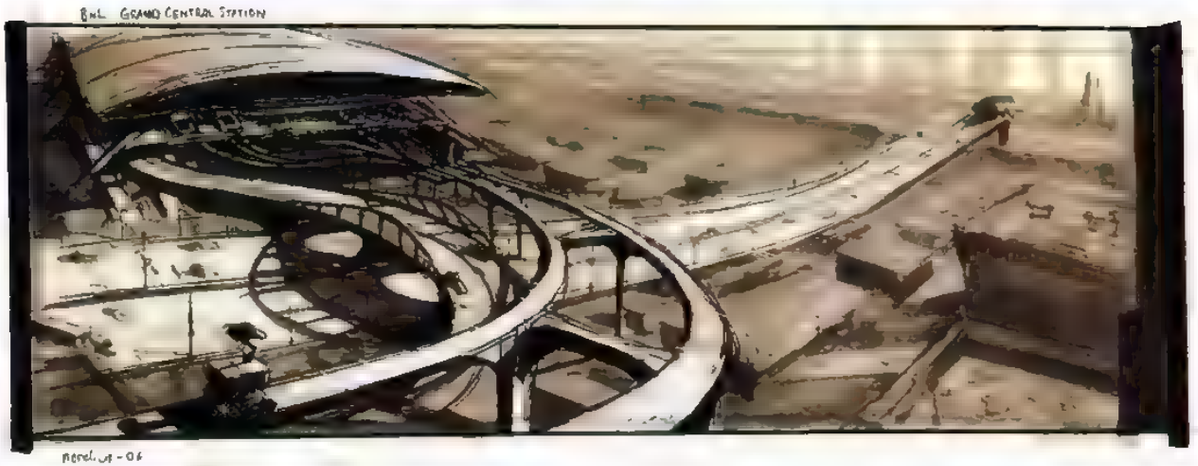


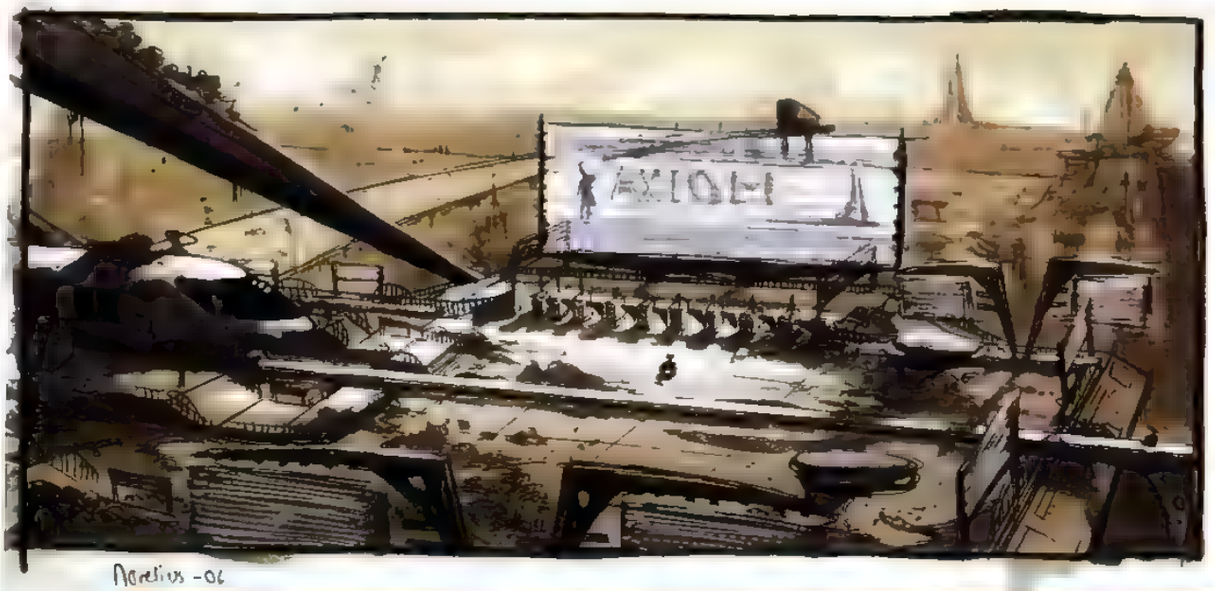
Kristian Norelius, 2006, pencil



Kristian Norelius, 2006, marker & correction fluid

Kristian Norelius, 2006, pen & marker



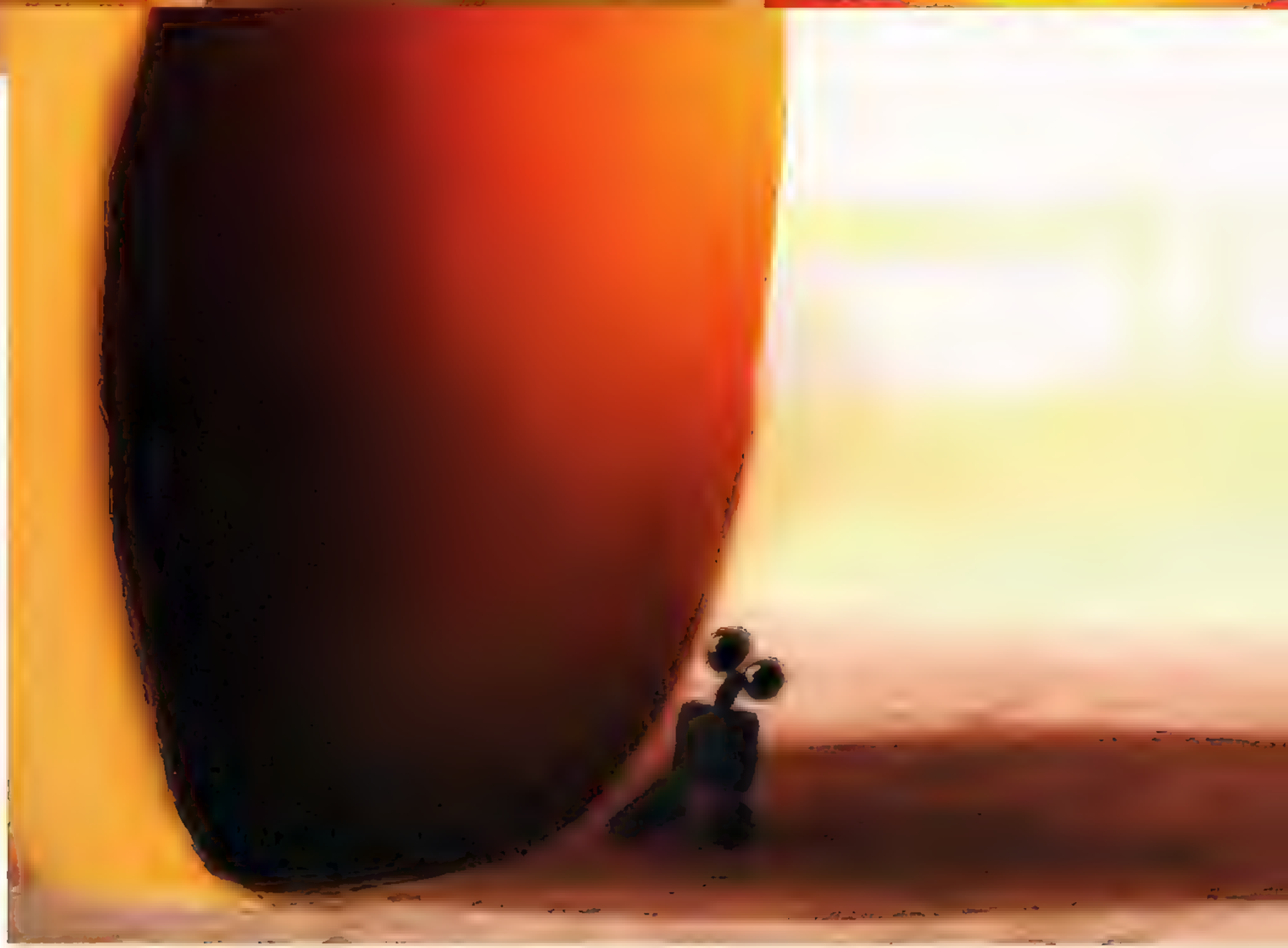


Kristian Norelius, 2006, marker & correction fluid

Robert Kondo, 2005, digital

CLEARANCE

John Lee, 2006, digital



Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

colorscript: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

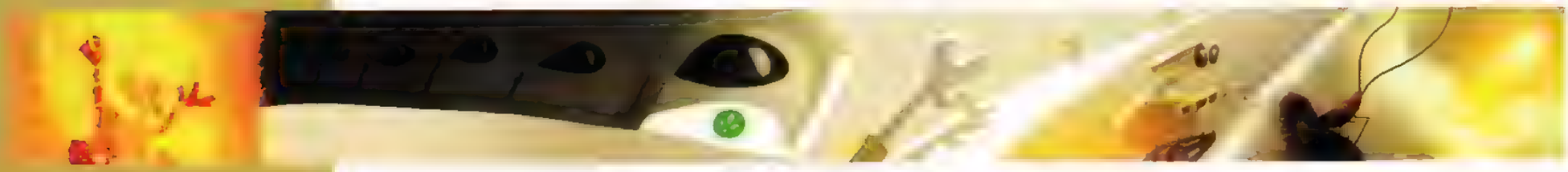
Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

colorscript: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

colorscripts: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

I started doing a rough colorscript outline for *WALL•E* right after *Finding Nemo*, but before I began work on *The Incredibles*. I started by separating the two worlds using color. Act One was all about WALL•E and his being alone for so long. So while we're in WALL•E's world, the color and lighting use propels his emotional path. Earth is dusty, high-contrast, and monochromatic, to support the idea that WALL•E's life is drab and never changing. Even his truck "home," which he's rigged with a multitude of lights, reflects his loneliness, as he only uses the few lights he needs to do his job. Then as EVE arrives and WALL•E cozies up to her, the colors become a little warmer. He even shows off his ingenuity when he takes her inside the truck, turning on all of the colorful lights he's rigged up. When we get to the *Axiom* it's all about sterility, order, and "aren't you glad we've thought of everything for you?" The passengers don't have to think. The colors are more artificial, more planned, more consumer-oriented. It's not gaudy, but there's a lot more color in Act Two than most people anticipate.

RALPH EGGLESTON, *production designer*

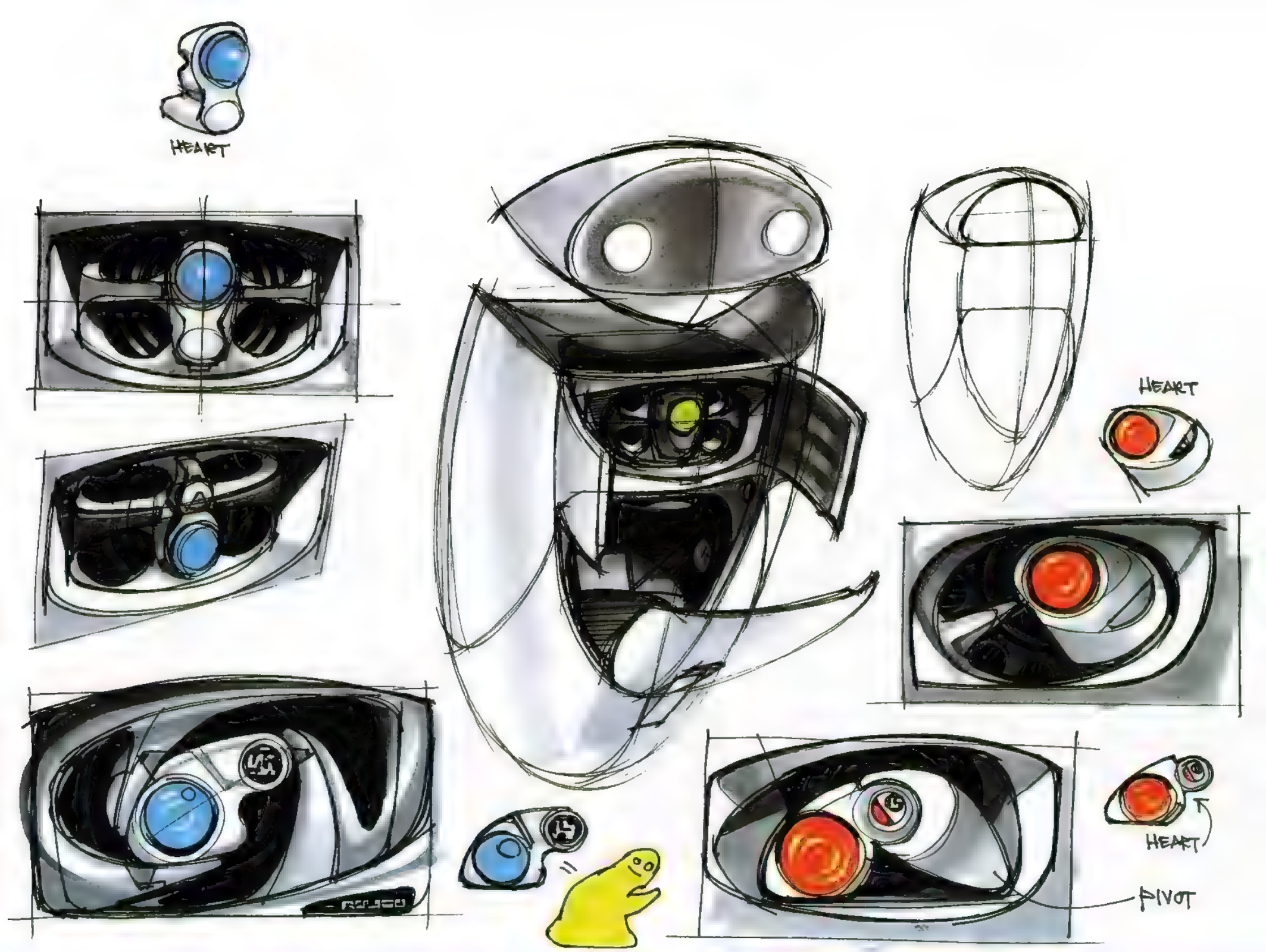


colorscripts: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

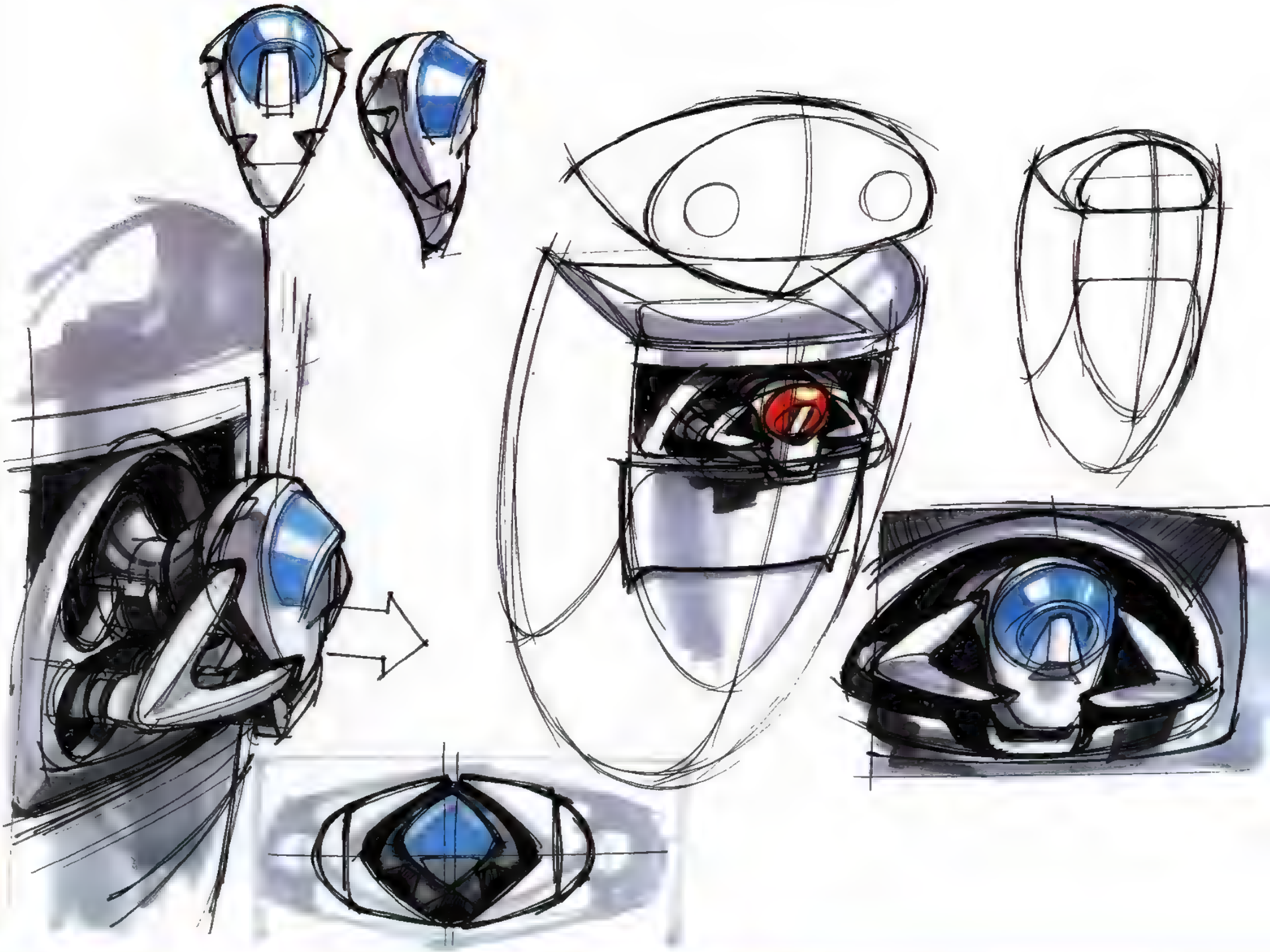
Andrew Stanton, 2004, pen

At a meeting somebody said that EVE should be like the dove in the Noah's Ark story. We thought, "That'll work." We re-jiggered the story so her job is to bring that plant back to the ship and signal that it's safe to go back to Earth.

JIM REARDON, *head of story/writer*



Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

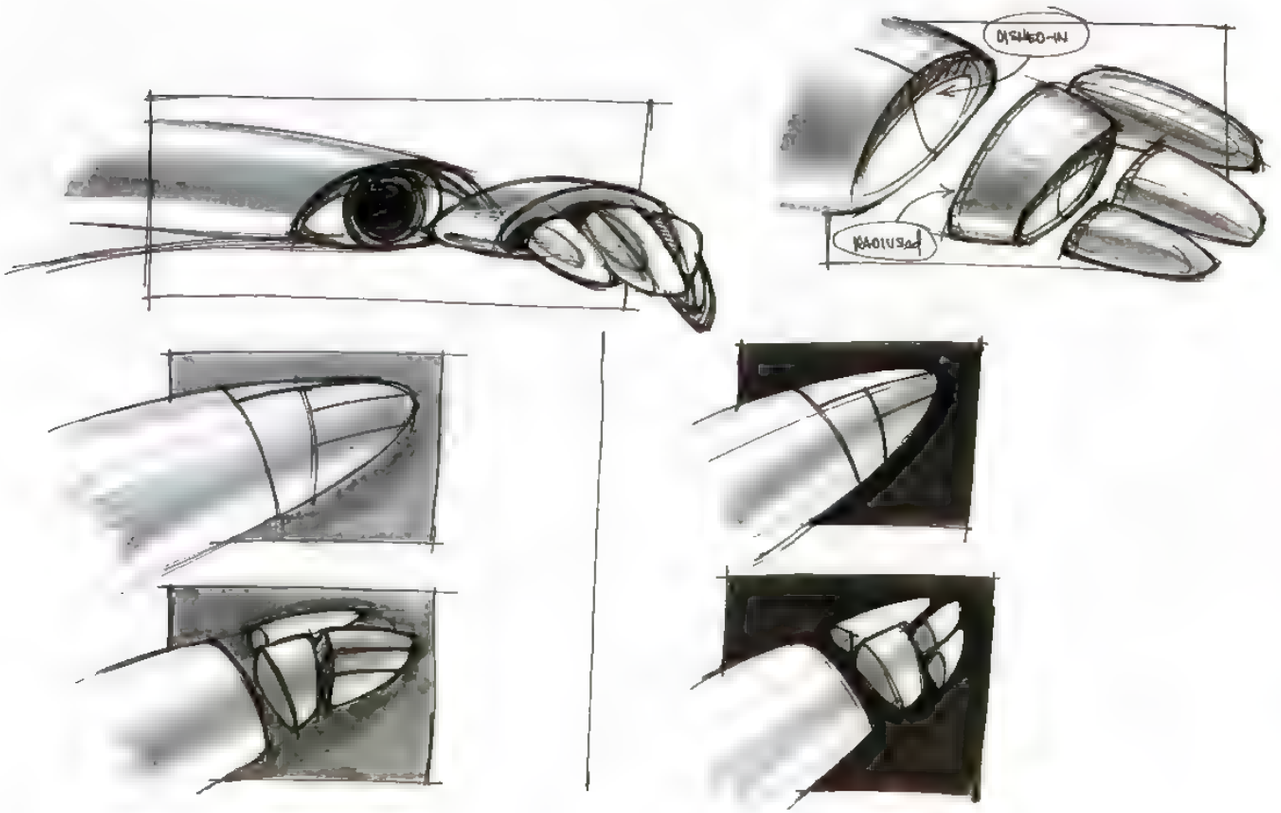


Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

EVE has some lights on her that indicate when different things are happening, helping with that visual language. WALL•E has a little light on him that's just a little power meter showing how much battery juice he has. He is much more about utility and she's a much more sexy, Mac-like design.

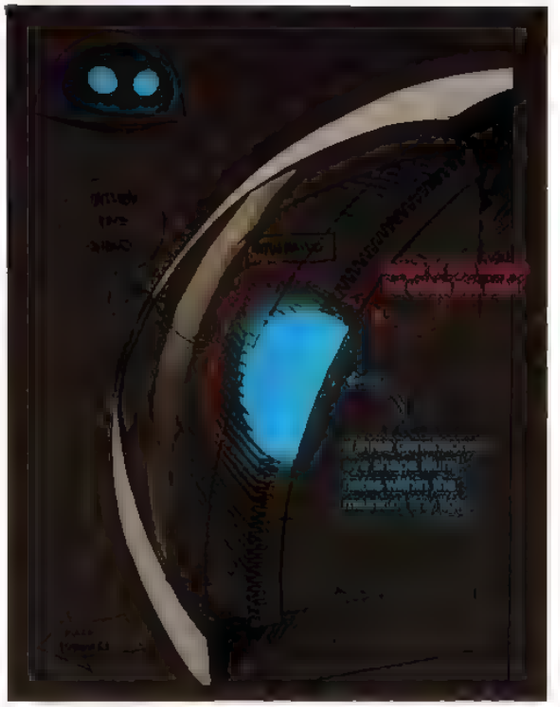
DANIELLE FEINBERG, *lighting director of photography*

Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

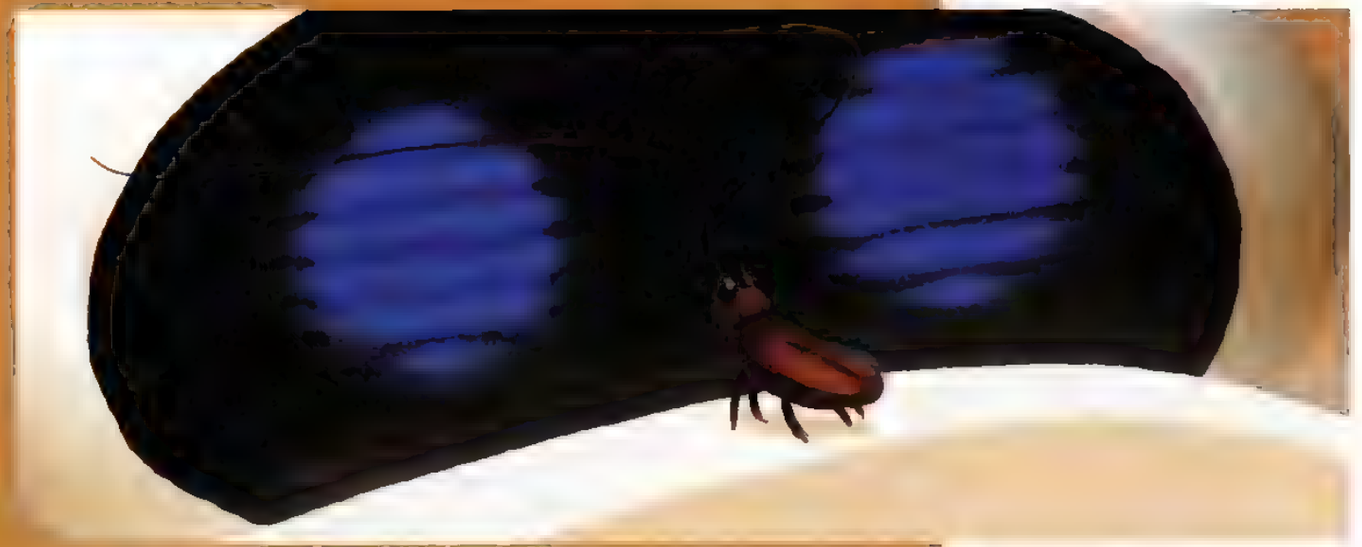


Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker

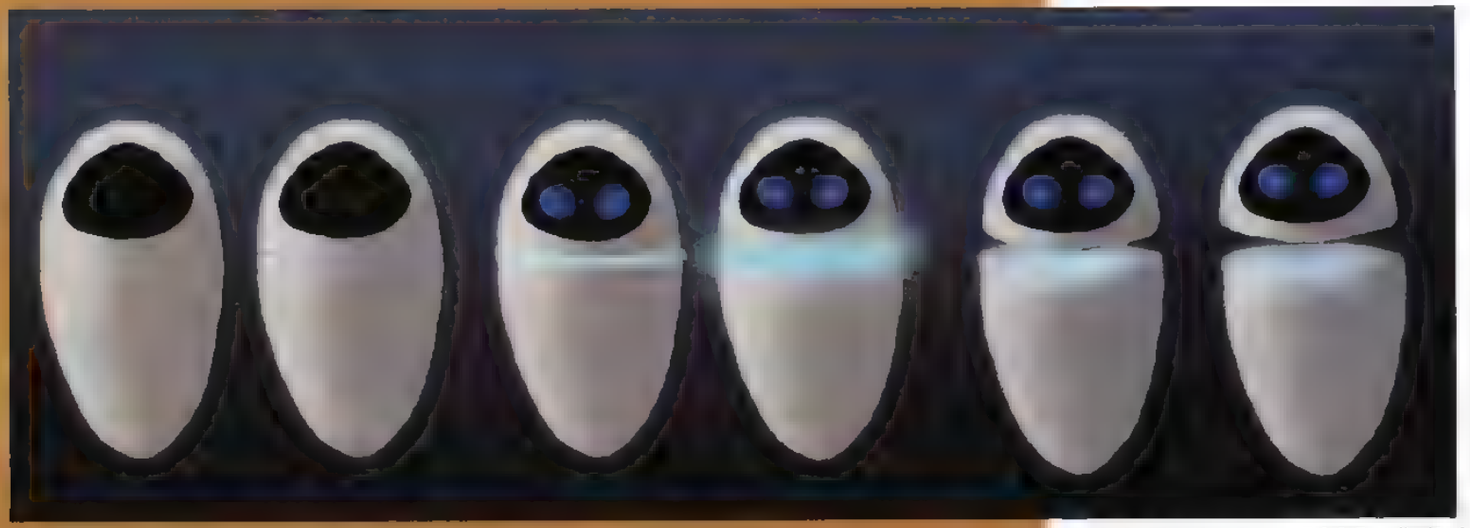
model packet: **Jay Shuster & Jason Deamer, 2006, pen & digital**



sculpt: **Jerome Ranft, 2005, clay**



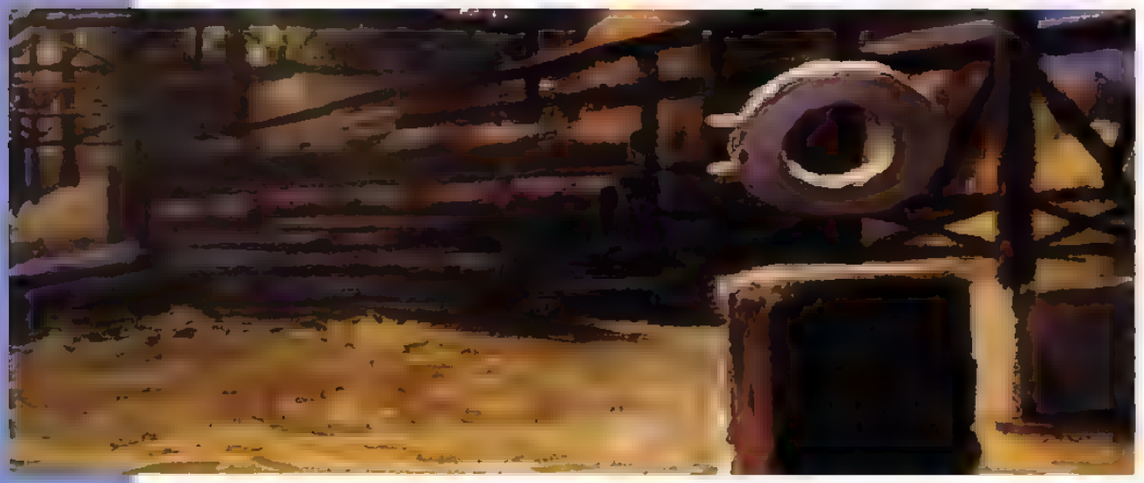
Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital



Ralph Eggleston, 2006, digital

lighting studies: John Lee, 2007, digital

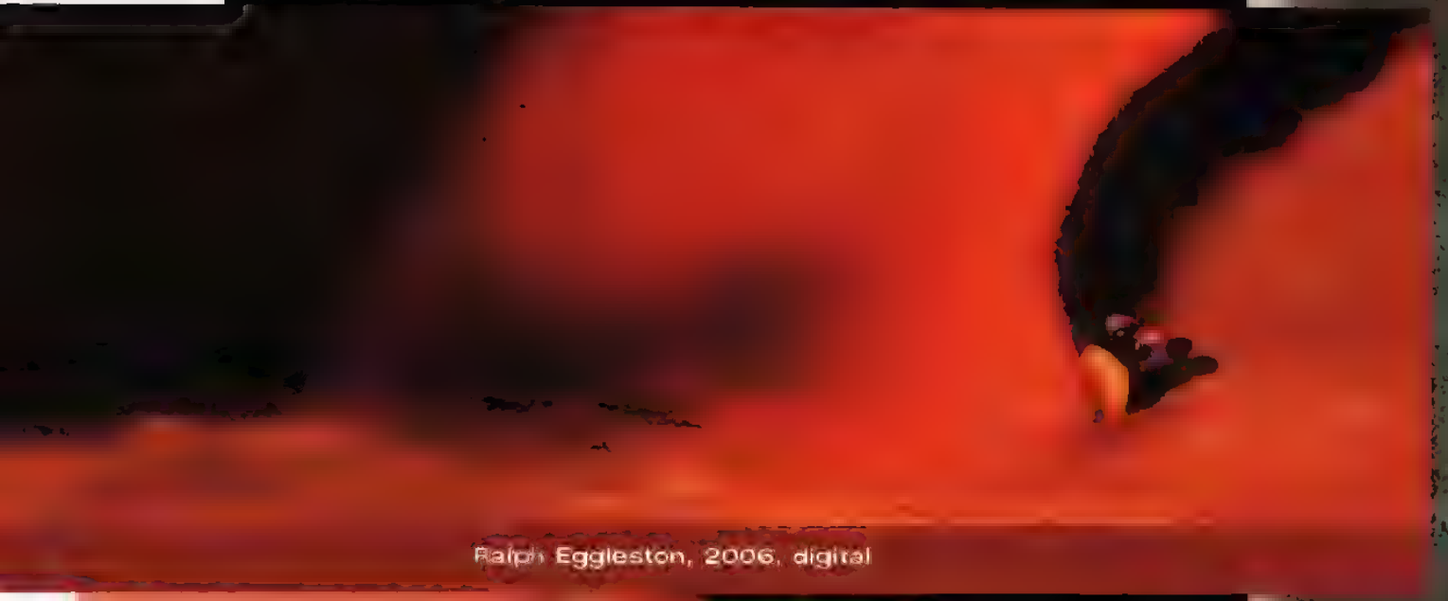
Ralph Eggleston, 2006, digital



lighting studies: **John Lee, 2006, digital**

Noah Klocek, 2006, marker & correction fluid

Anthony Christov, 2006, pencil



Ralph Eggleston, 2006, digital

Ralph Eggleston, 2006, digital

Simon Varela, 2005, charcoal & hairspray

Anthony Christov, 2006, pencil & digital

Anthony Christov, 2006, pencil & digital

Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

colorscript: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

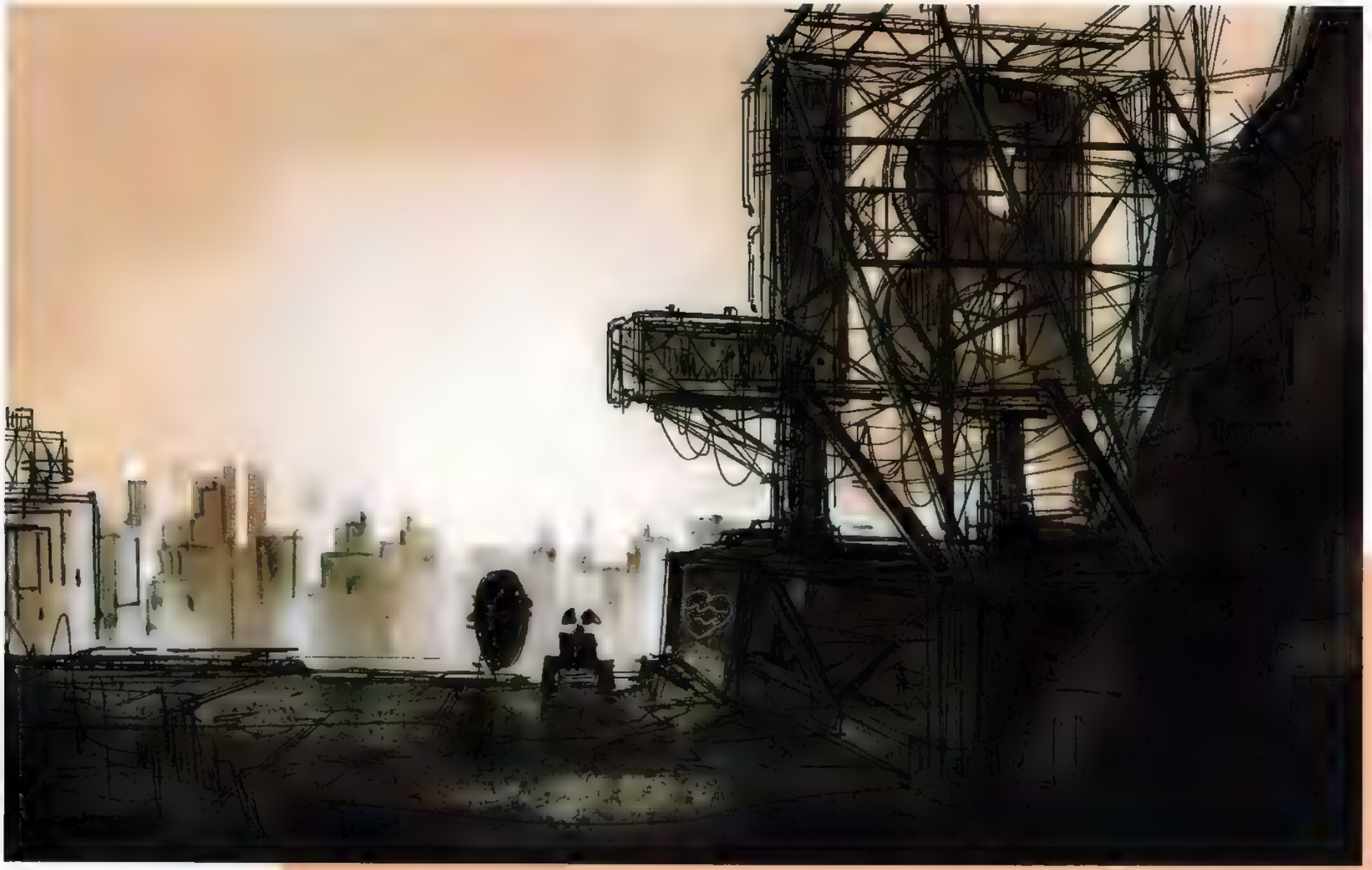
lighting study: **John Lee, 2006, digital**

colorscript: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

lighting study: **John Lee, 2006, digital**

From the very beginning, I could never drop the idea that it should really be a love story.

ANDREW STANTON, *director/writer*



Nelson Bohol, 2006, pen & digital

lighting studies: **John Lee, 2006, digital**

3 : THE

AXIOM

Welcome to the starship *Axiom*, a great big, beautiful tomorrow of unparalleled service and entertainment courtesy of the Buy N Large Corporation. A sparkling design counterpoint to Earth's post-consumer blight, the *Axiom* is adrift with gelatinous, devolved remnants of the human race, a species hopelessly lost in space.

"Bringing in the new world that WALL•E goes to has always been the biggest problem," Jim Reardon says. "The 'gels' are important in the grander scheme, the thematic structure of the movie. Man has to get back on his own two feet, literally. Humans have to get back to Earth and try to clean up the mess."

"In the early versions of the picture, we were going to hide the fact that the 'gels' were once human," he admits. "And it was like a *Planet of the Apes* moment. At the end of the picture you realize that they were human and just kind of got fatter and more gelatinous. But it confused the audience, and we realized that when you're doing a picture with hardly any dialogue you have to be really clear."

"The process of creating the humans in the film has been an evolution. Which is interesting for characters that are supposed to be devolved from humans, right?" says Jason Deamer. "We actually devolved them too far, down to gels, and then it was a slow but sure process of evolving them back toward human again. We returned to this idea that they're like babies. [Living so long on the *Axiom*] they've never had to do anything for themselves," he continues. "They are almost fetus-like. Their fingers haven't completely developed. Their ears haven't completely developed."

"They've all been couch-potatoed to death," quips Ralph Eggleston.

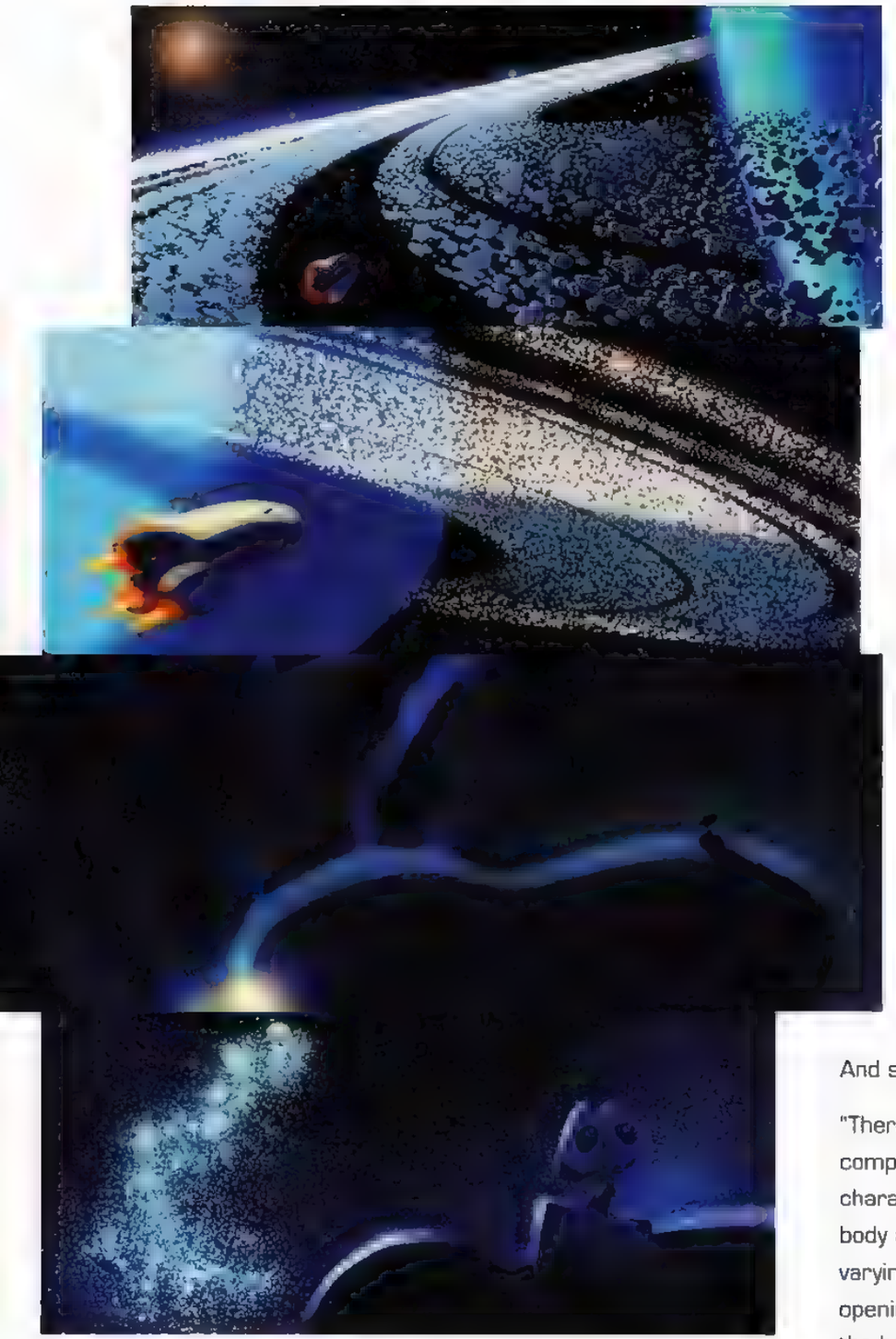
The *Axiom* is a vessel designed to function as Noah's Ark by way of *The Love Boat*. Its passengers have been living in the lap of luxury, with an array of artificial servants tending to their every need. A constant stream of entertainment and product messaging keeps the "gels" distracted from their environmental dilemma. "I don't think you'd walk out of the movie thinking 'Oh, I wish I could live in a cruise ship forever,'" predicts Jeremy Lasky. "You might think that this is something that would be interesting or fun or amusing, but, taken to an extreme like this, it's a nightmare. It's just as bad, in a different way, as living on this planet covered with trash."

"These are going to be very different worlds," Danielle Feinberg shares. "Earth has lots of atmosphere and dust and this limited palette and then, when you get into space, it's a super-clean environment with a lot more color and a Vegas-like atmosphere, a kind of Disneyland."

"Act Two is basically Tomorrowland," says Eggleston, whose crew was inspired by an Oakland Museum exhibit honoring Disneyland's fiftieth anniversary. Walt Disney's ultramodern redesign of his 1967

previous spread: Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

this spread: Paul Topolos, 2007, digital; layout by Jay Shuster



Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

"World on the Move" inspired the *Axiom*'s optimistic futurism, with its cargo of guests seeking a new and better life.

"We found the colorful, almost retro naiveté of 1950s and 1960s design sensibility very appealing," says Anthony Christov. "Optimism. This is the attitude that Buy N Large tries to instill in people. 'We can do it. We'll clean it up for you.' Everything was doable in the '50s and '60s. It was this world of 'can-do.'"

"Most people think of the 1960s, that feeling of the space age, when they think of Tomorrowland," Noah Klocek adds. "What we tried to do is put that same excitement about the future back into the film's vision of the future."

"The artist's job was to make a futuristic world that wasn't so crazy that it was totally removed from our world," says Dan Holland, "by not getting too out there and too organic, but keeping the real world in mind, rather than some made-up, crazy alien future."

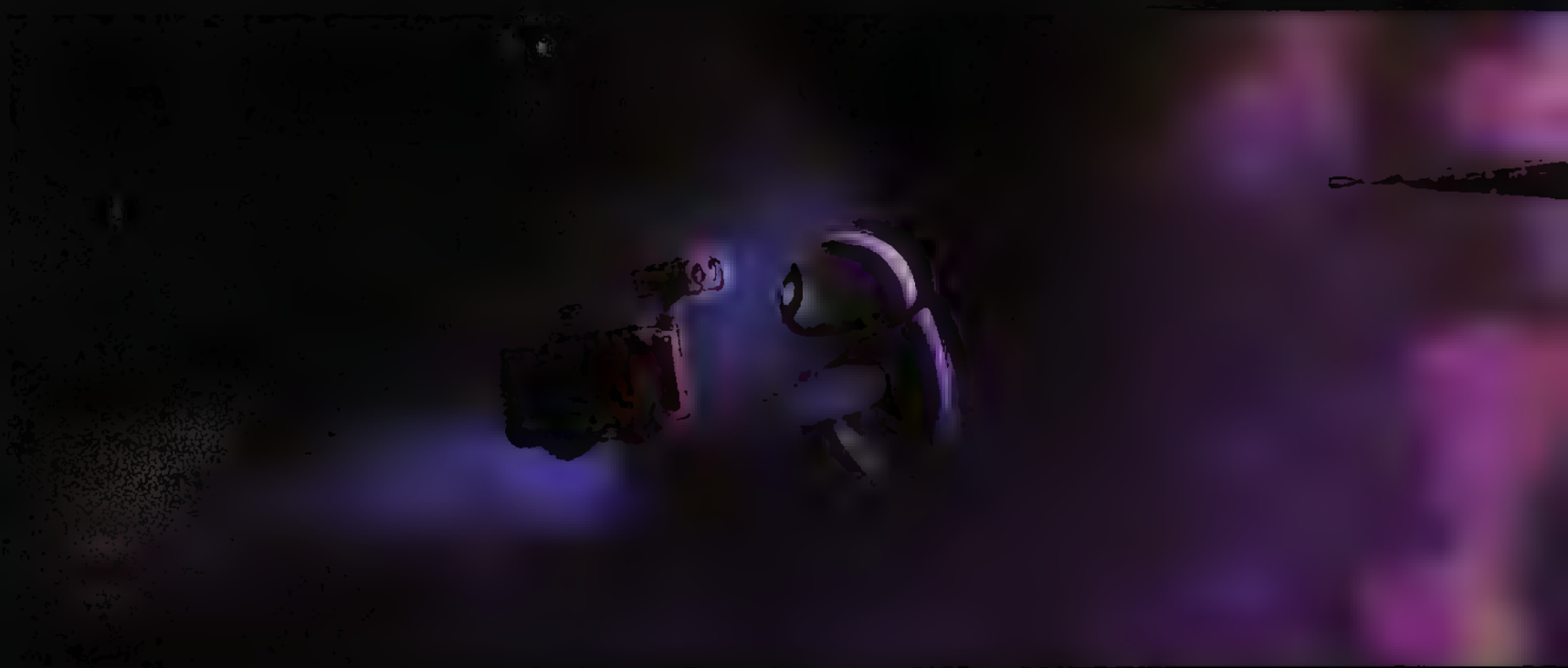
To achieve that plausibility, the artists examined materials, technology, and design from the future world of industry. "We had a guy come over from Apple, Jonathan Ive, who designed the iPod and iMac. Apple's philosophy for the ultimate in design is a surface that is perfectly smooth and all the buttons are subcutaneous, below the surface," remembers Holland. "That's what EVE's world is. The ultimate streamlined surface." And so it was that EVE became the iPod of robots.

"There were nine revisions of EVE. Nine times where I started completely from scratch and rebuilt the model," remembers character co-lead James Bickerstaff. "The shape of her outer body as it curves from the front to the back is constantly varying, so there's a lot of subtlety in her form. She keeps opening up to reveal smaller pieces of herself, hidden in the body. All of these have to fit together in such a way that, when she's closed up, she looks completely unbroken."

"Very early on, we had the idea that EVE and WALL•E would have two separate theories of design, so that WALL•E was more square and more utilitarian, whereas EVE was more streamlined," says Klocek, noting that the characters' textures are reflected in their habitats. WALL•E's form-as-function appearance mirrors the rocky, trash-strewn landscape on Earth while EVE's utopian world looks to be just the opposite. "Someone has taken a machine to EVE's world and hit every single corner with sandpaper and tried to round it, so there are no hard edges and angles . . . Take everything that is cutting-edge today and then push it farther out, one hundred years in the future, and then have the coolest shape and design you can think about, but the simplest at the same time," he adds, evoking the modernist aesthetic.

In time, Pixar's design team may in turn inspire a new generation to imagine a tomorrow filled with hopeful anticipation, beauty, betterment, and independent flight.

"I keep coming back to the Disneyland stuff and looking at it and that environment," Eggleston muses. "I still want that future. We keep asking, 'Where's my jetpack? I want that jetpack!'"

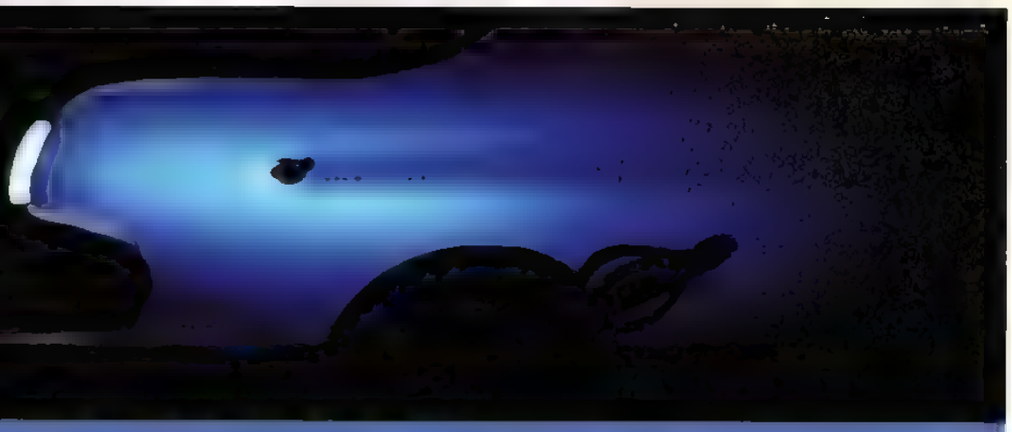


Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

Dan Holland, 2005, pen & marker

THE AXIOM

Nelson Bohol, 2005, pen & marker



Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

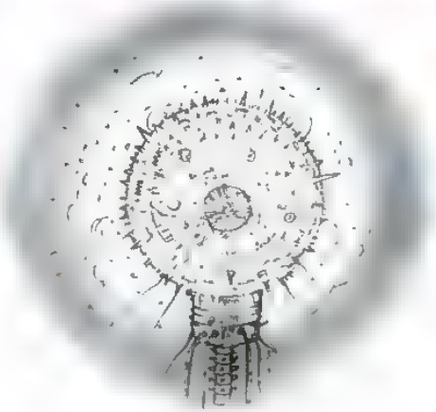
Ralph Eggleston, 2005, pen & marker

John Lee, 2006, digital

John Lee, 2006, digital;
layout by Derek Thompson

Noah Klocek, 2005, pencil

Shaun Tan, 2005, pencil



Shaun Tan, 2005, pencil

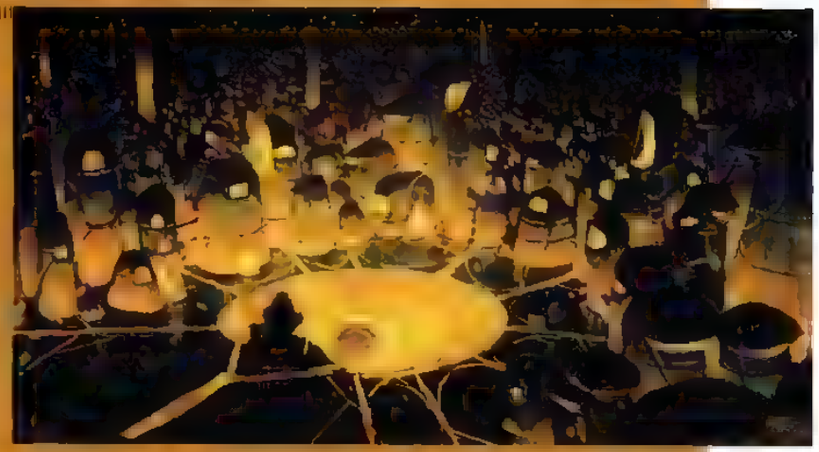
Noah Klocek, 2005, digital; layout by Dan Holland

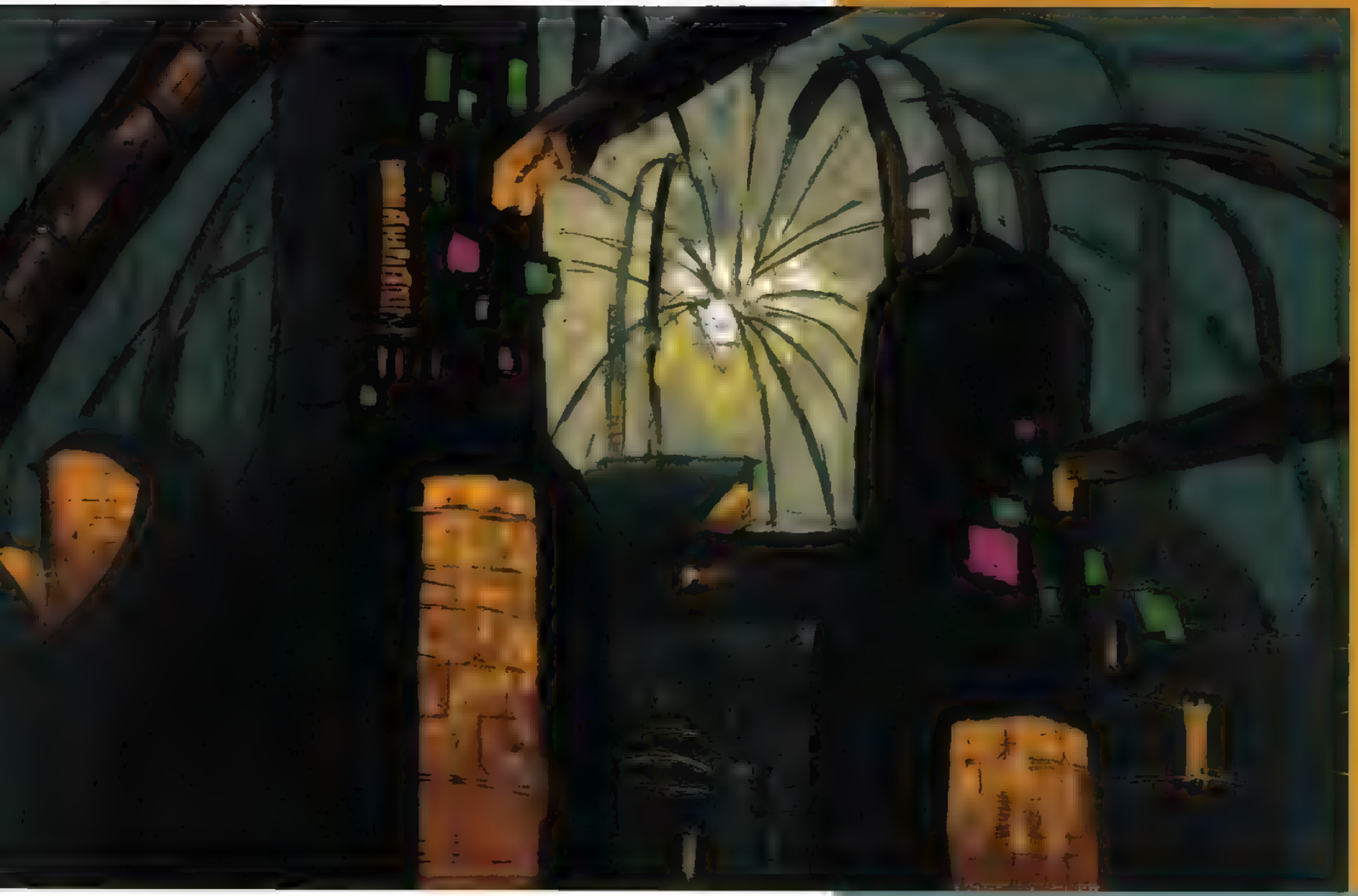
Noah Klocek, 2005, digital; layout by Dan Holland

I think that the 1950s was a great period. There was so much clarity of design because there was so much less ambiguity in our understanding of the world. The more informed you are, the more ambiguity sneaks in.

ANTHONY CHRISTOV, *art director*

Noah Klocek, 2005, digital

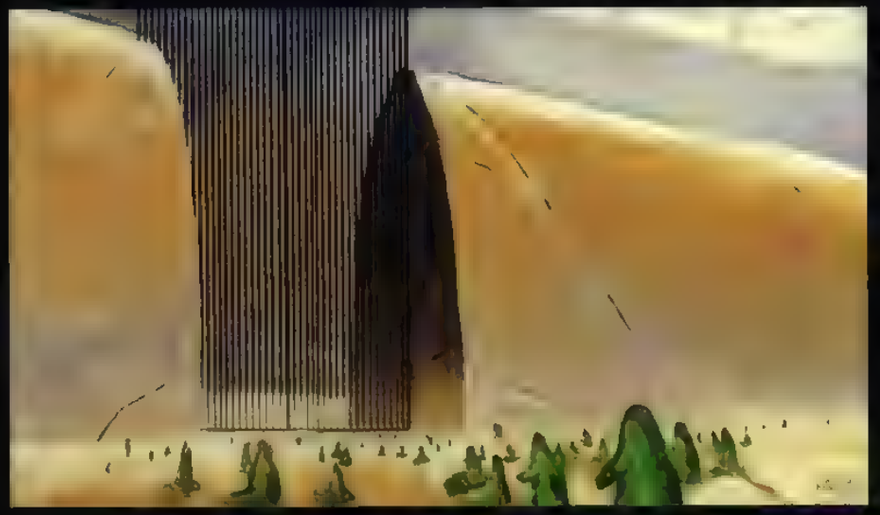




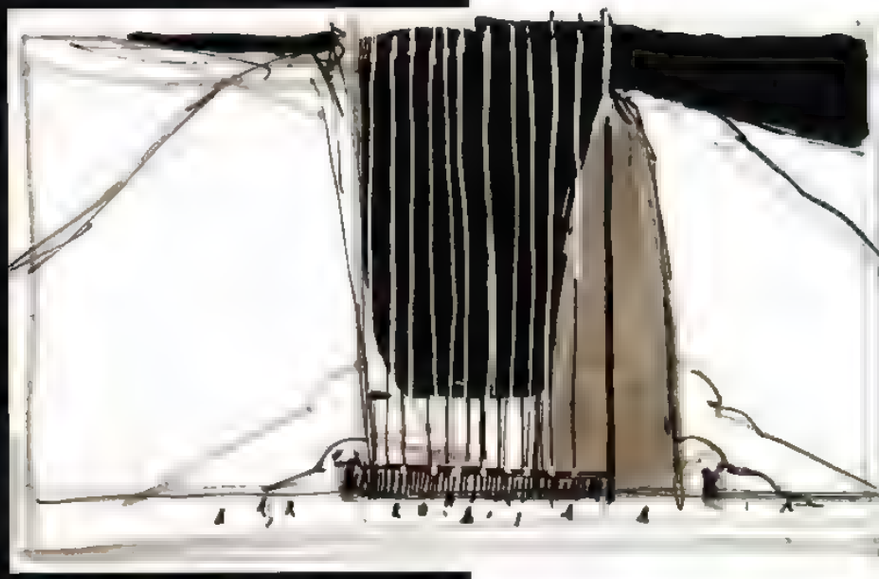
Noah Klocek, 2005, digital

Jennifer Chang, 2005, pen & digital

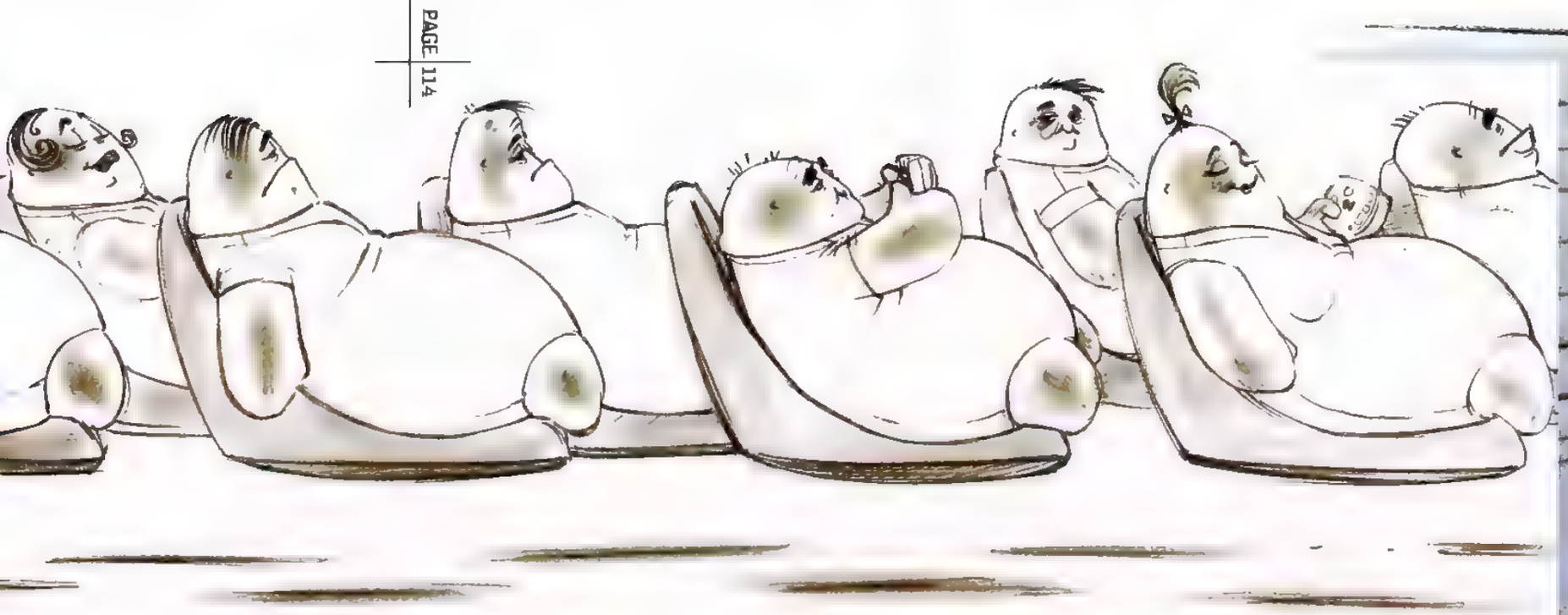
Noah Klocek, 2005, digital



Noah Klocek, 2005, pen & marker

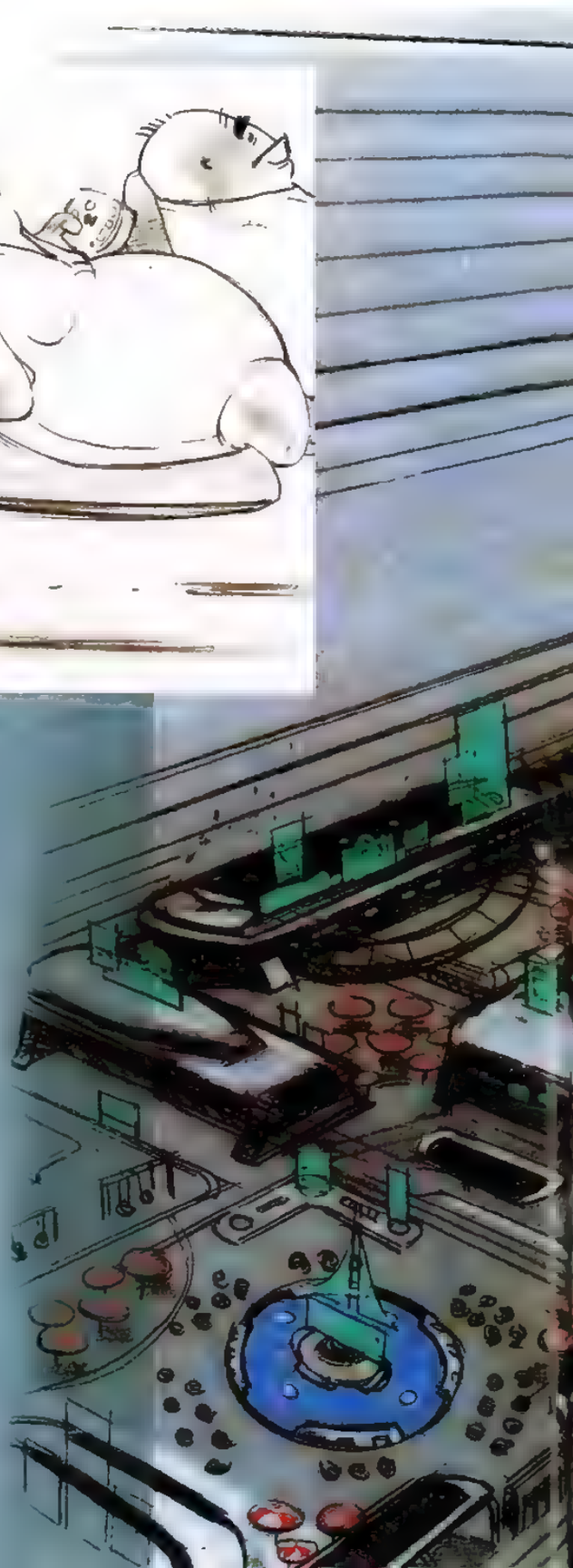


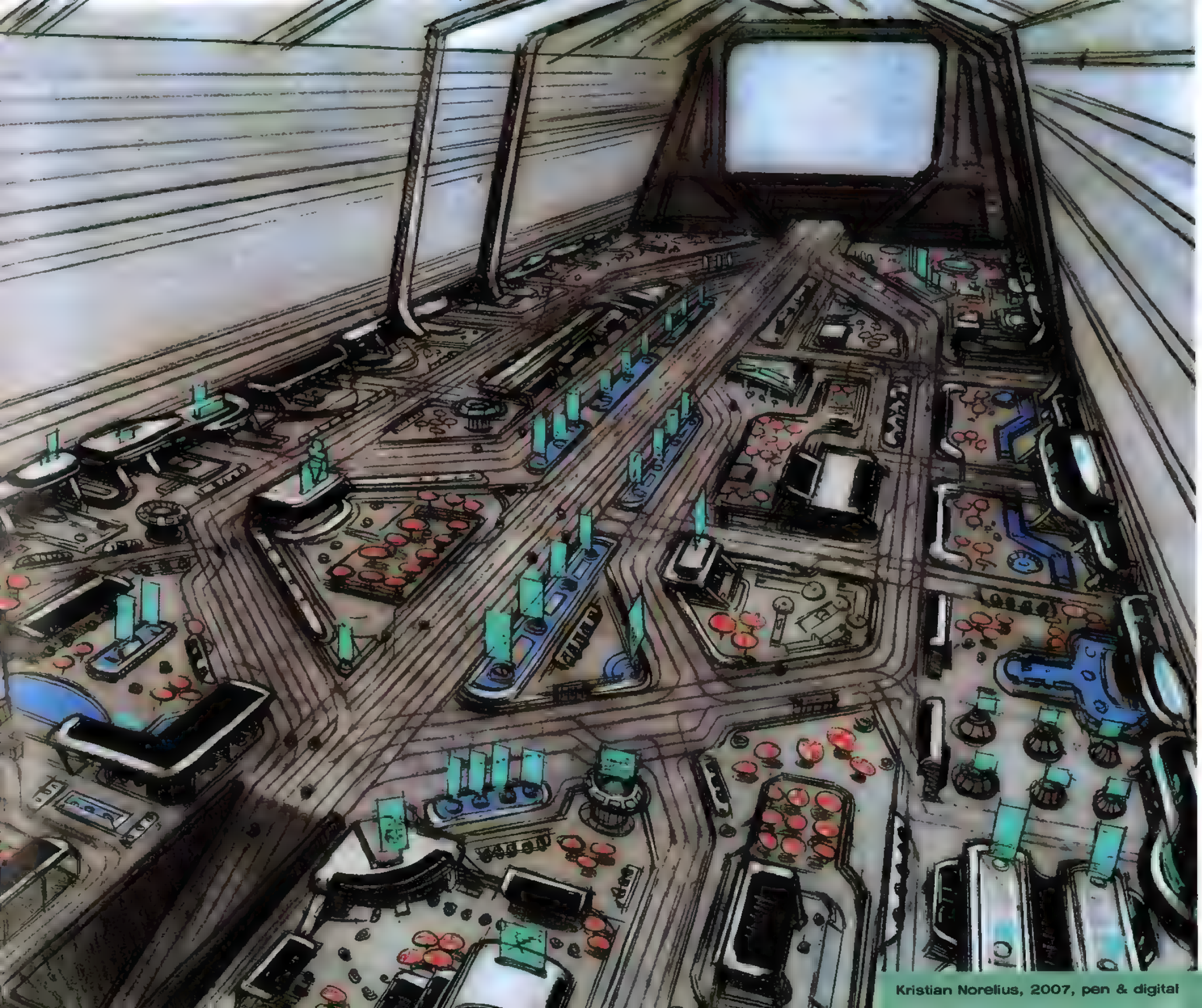
Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital



Jason Deamer, 2006, pencil

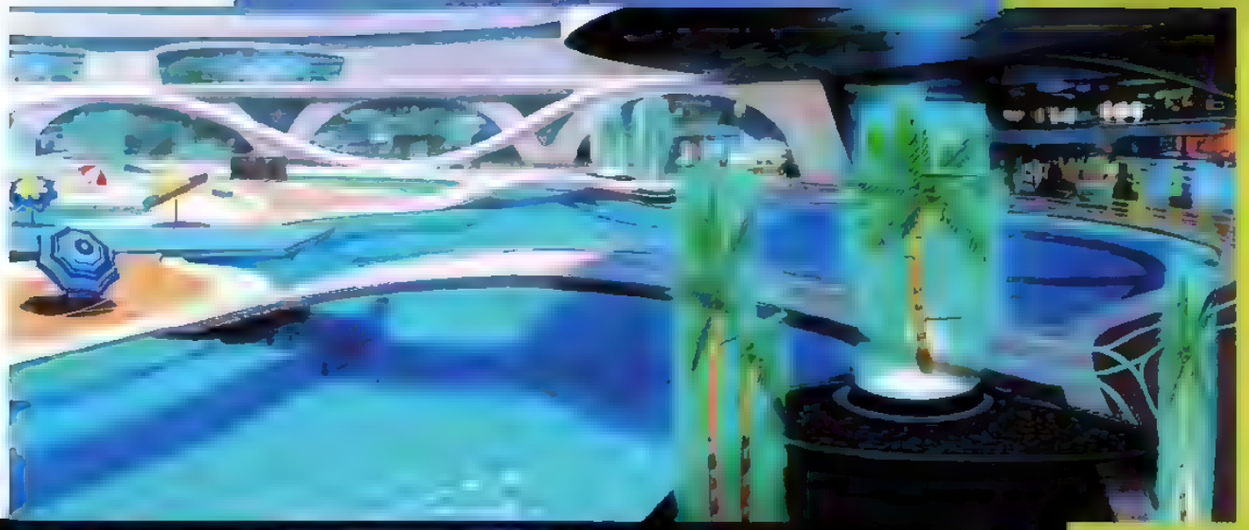
graphics: Craig Foster, Susan Bradley & Mark Holmes, 2007, digital

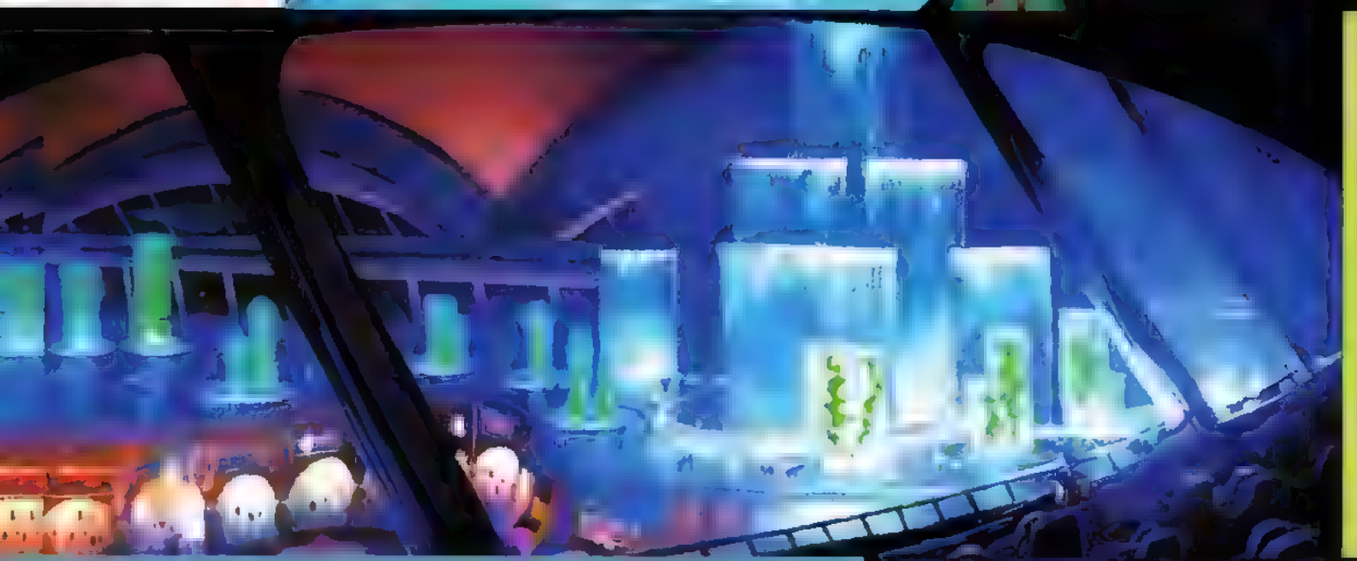




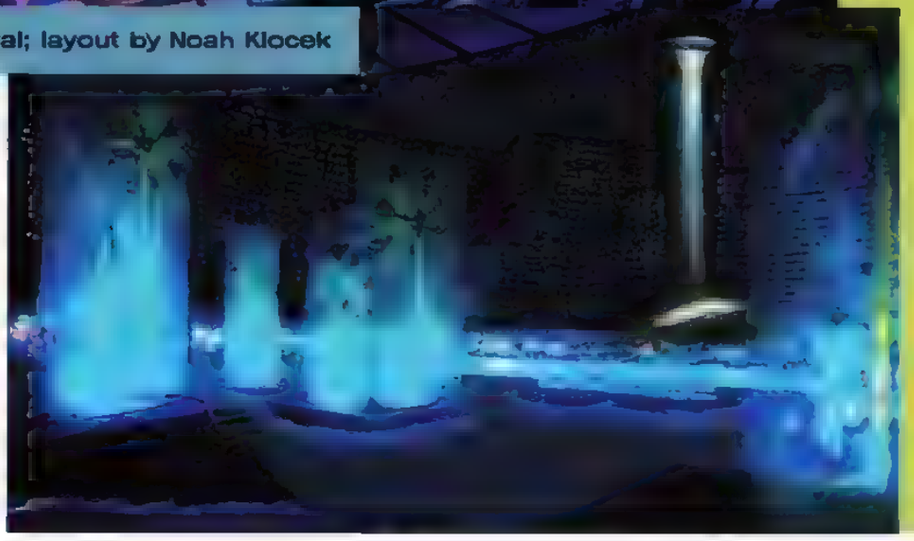
Kristian Norelius, 2007, pen & digital

set painting: **John Lee, 2007, digital**



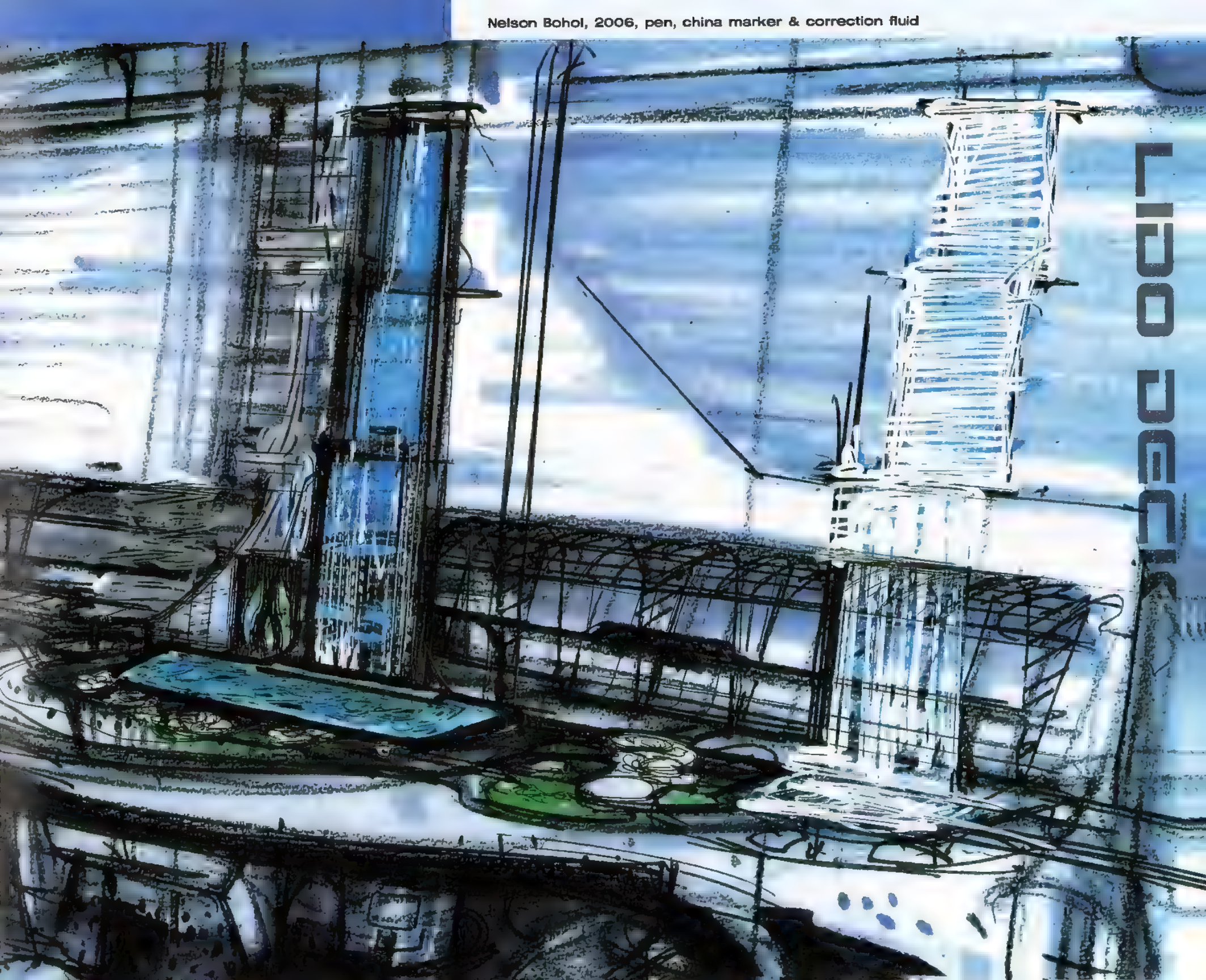


Dominique Louis, 2006, digital; layout by Noah Klocek



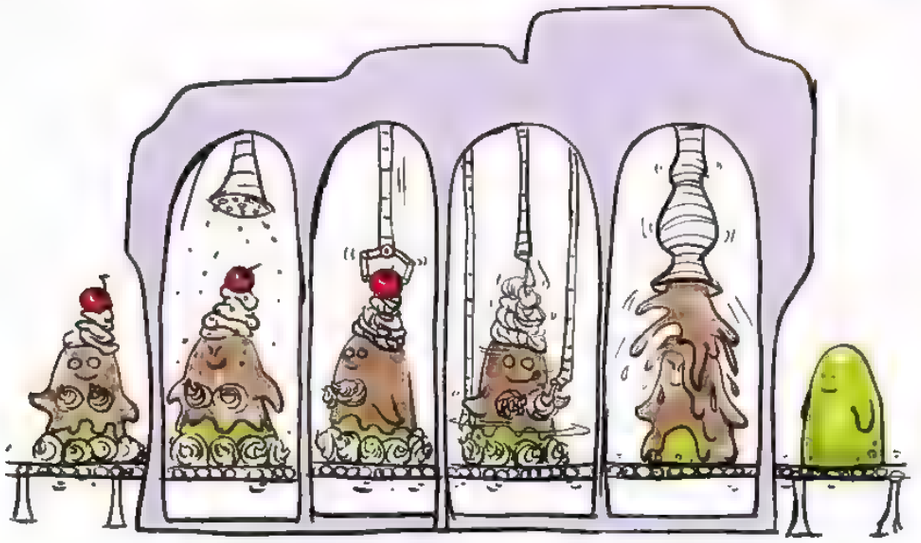
Ernesto Nemesio, 2007, digital; layout by Nelson Bohol

Nelson Bohol, 2006, pen, china marker & correction fluid

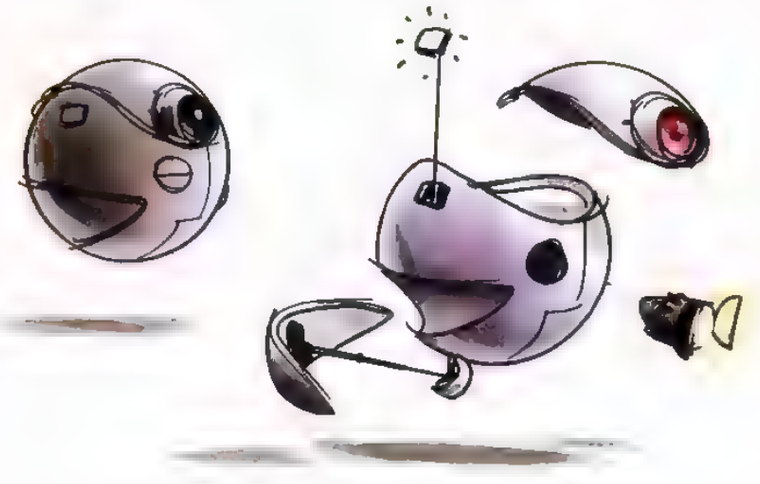


Dan Holland, 2005, pen & marker

Dan Holland, 2006, marker

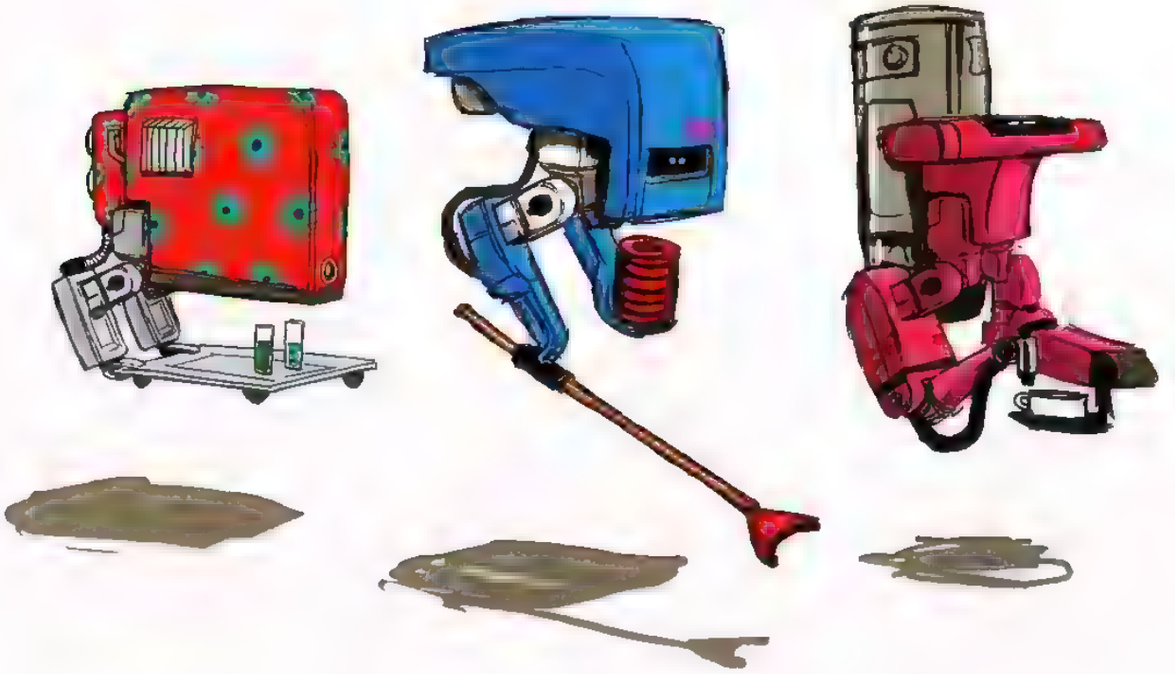


Jennifer Chang, 2005, marker



Jason Deamer, 2005, pen & marker

Angus MacLane, 2007, digital



My whole mantra is that robots are about function first. Form completely follows function, as the saying goes.

JASON DEAMER, *character art director*

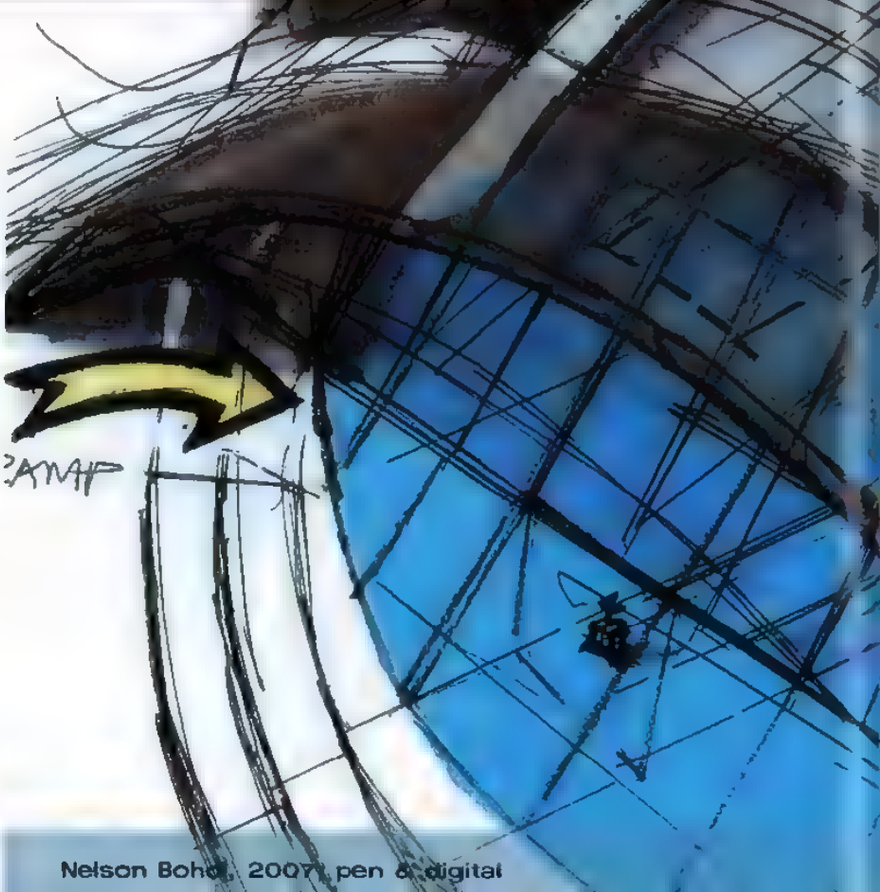
Dan Holland, 2005, marker

Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital

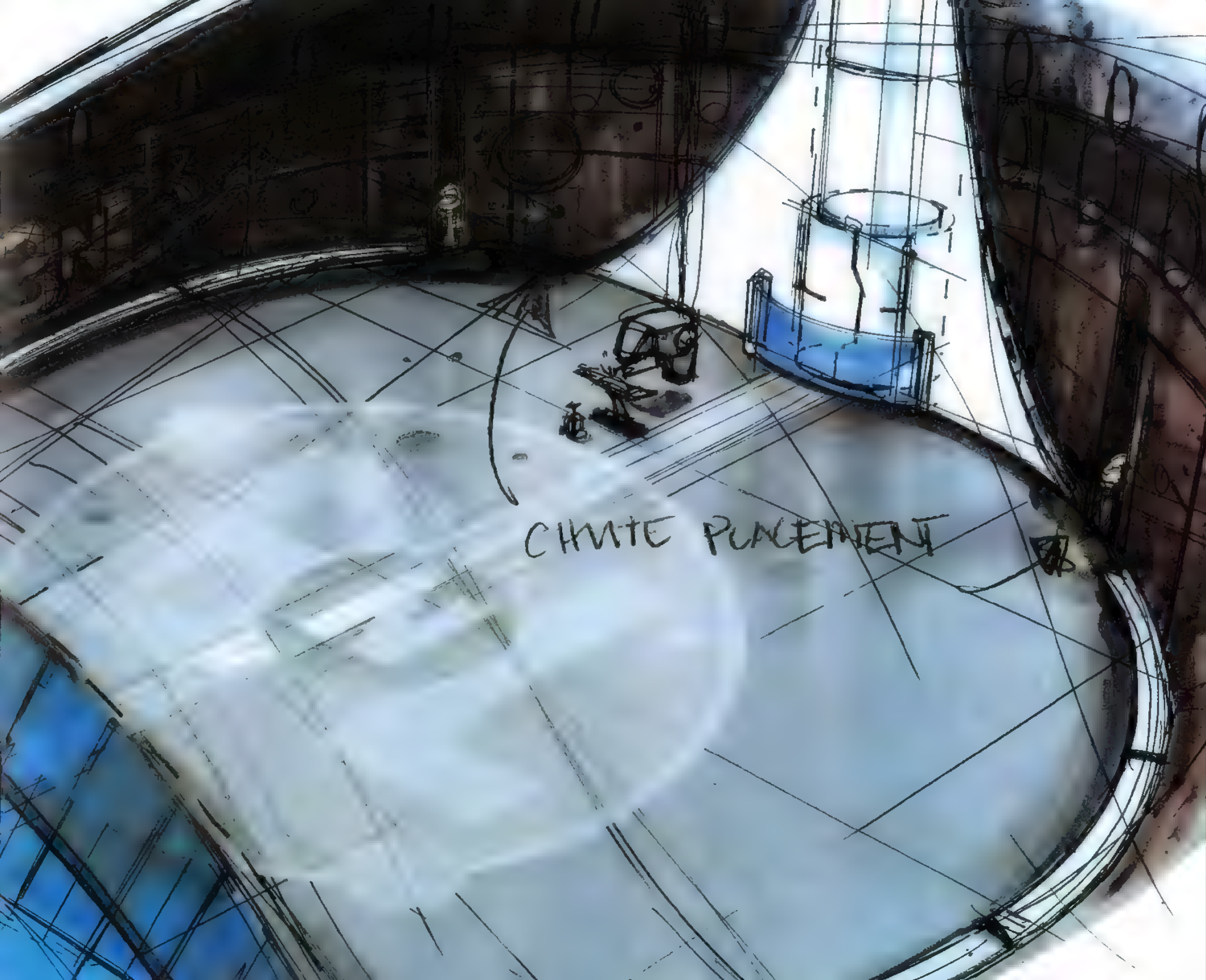
Jason Deamer, 2006, pen & marker

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

Jay Shuster, 2005, pen & marker



Nelson Bohol, 2007, pen & digital


CHUTE PLACEMENT

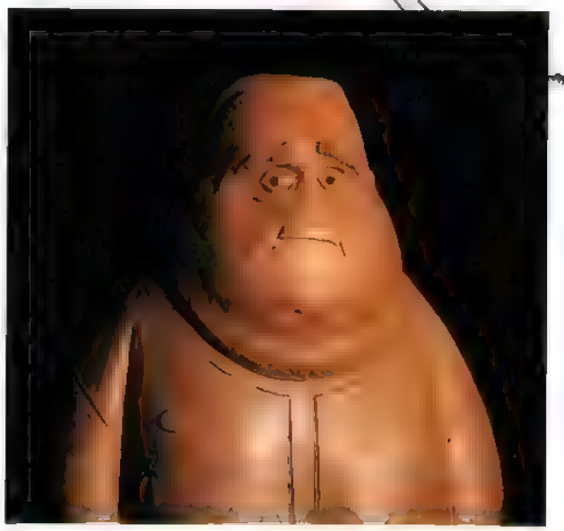
THE CAPTAIN

We had a wonderful guy from NASA come visit—James Hicks, the world's foremost expert on muscle disuse atrophy, which is what happens after too much time in space. As blood is pumped to your heart, all of your extremities start shrinking. Your skin becomes sallow and translucent. Your load-bearing bones go first, so your ankles go. Slowly but surely, all your muscles would separate and you'd revert to this gelatinous little baby. You lose 4 percent of your body volume and body mass in outer space. If they sent people to Mars, by the time they came back they'd be very vulnerable to heart attack They can't beat the harshness of gravity.

RALPH EGGLESTON, *production designer*

Matt Nolte, 2006, charcoal

sculpt: **Jerome Ranft, 2007, clay**



sculpt: **Jerome Ranft, 2007, clay**

Kristian Norelius, 2006, pen & marker

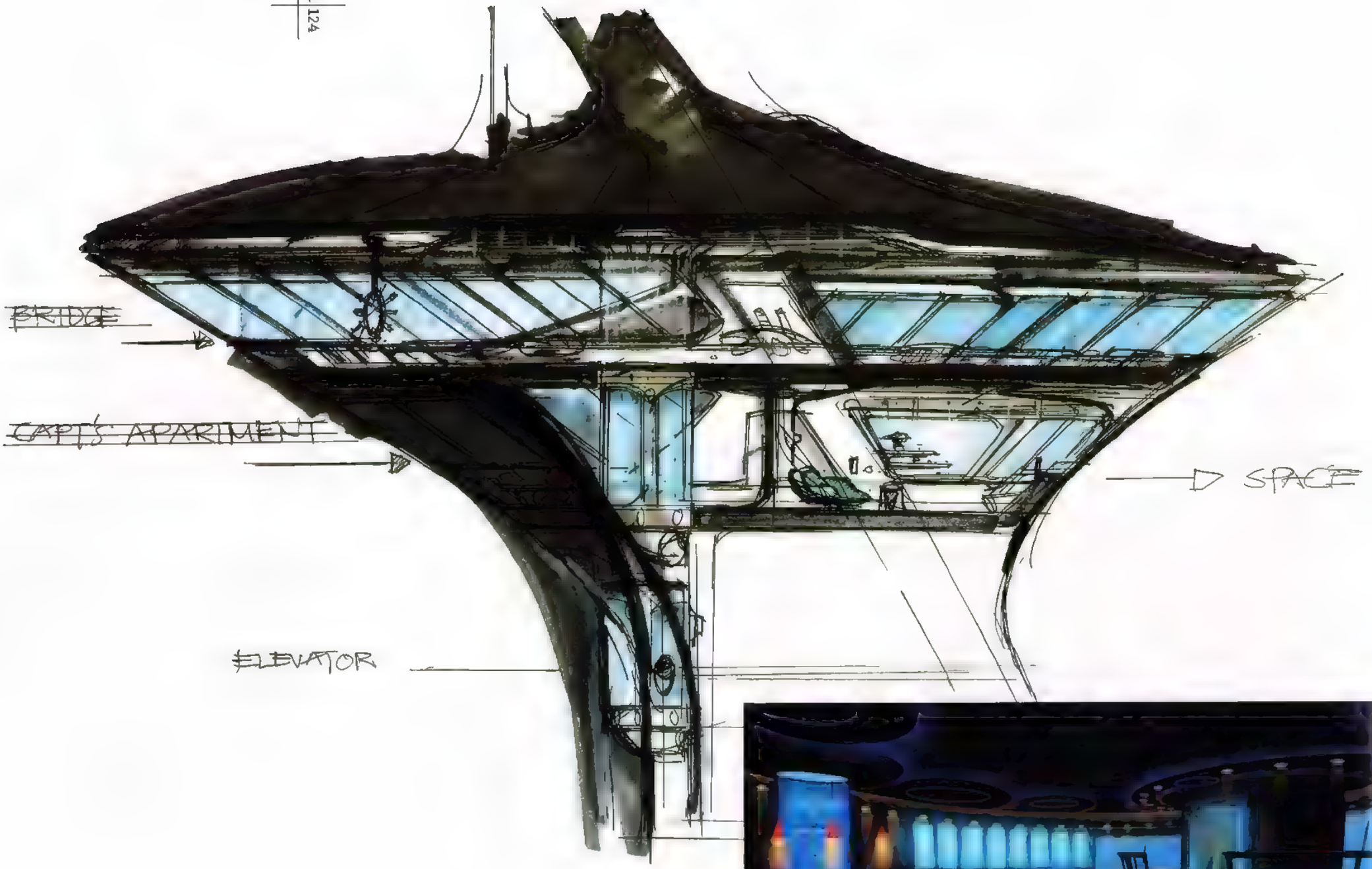
Dan Holland, 2006, marker

Jason Deamer, 2006, pen

Jason Deamer, 2006, digital

Jason Deamer, 2006, digital

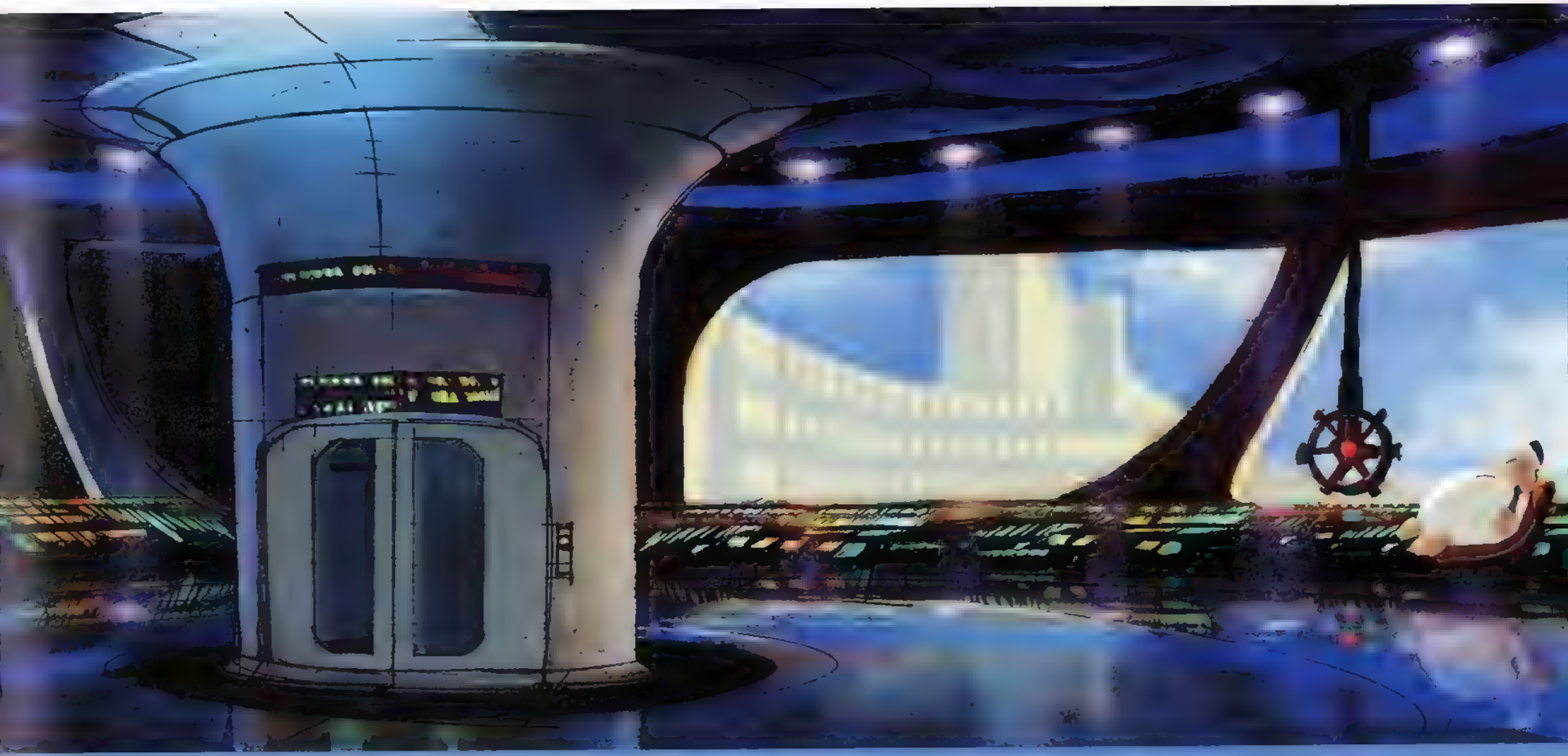
Bob Scott, 2006, pen



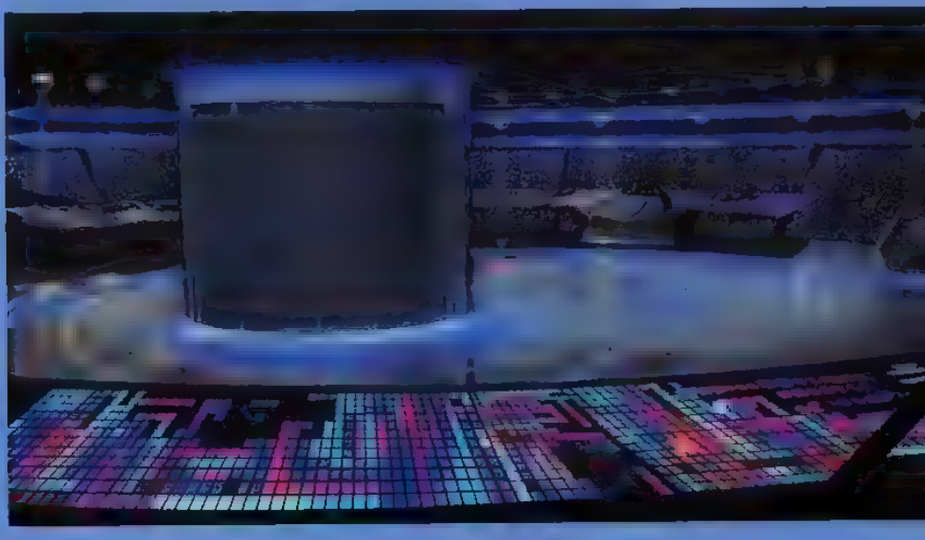
Nelson Bohol, 2006, pen & marker

set painting: **Ernesto Nemesio, 2007, digital; layout by Nelson Bohol**

John Lee, 2006, digital; layout by Jay Shuster



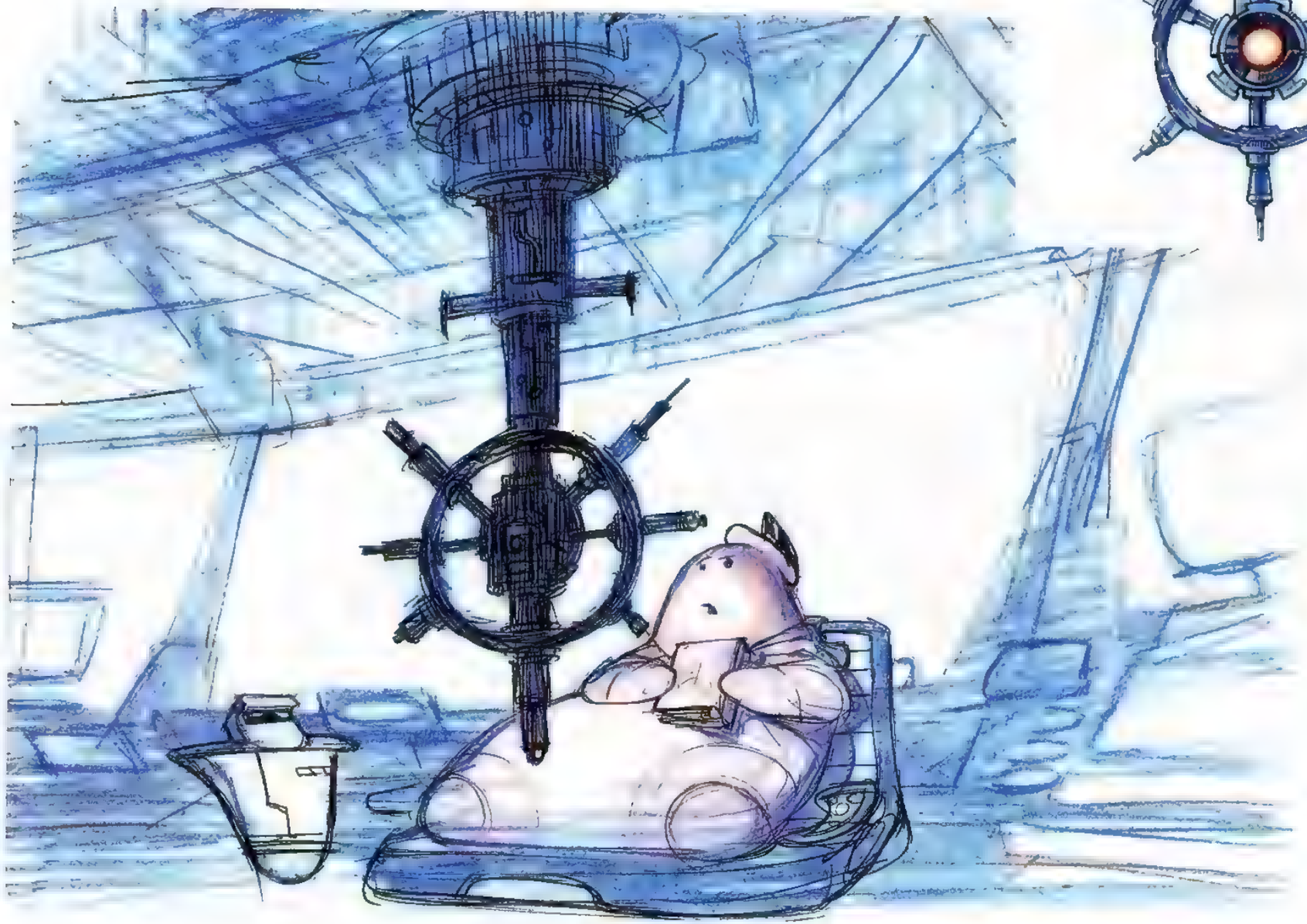
Jason Deamer, 2006, digital



set painting: **Ernesto Nemesio, 2007, digital**

In some ways, the Autopilot is HAL (the sentient computer in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*) for kids. Because the big difference between Auto and WALL•E, and ultimately EVE and a lot of other robots, is that he does not find a way to rise above his programming. He is just following orders. WALL•E affects other robots so much that they betray their programming or go beyond it, and Auto cannot. That's his flaw.

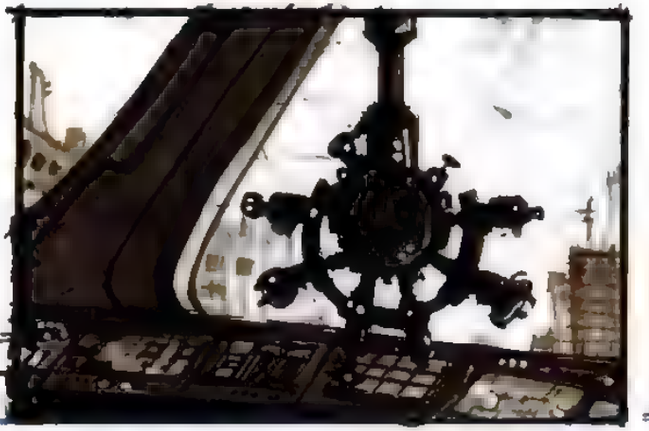
JIM REARDON, *head of story/writer*

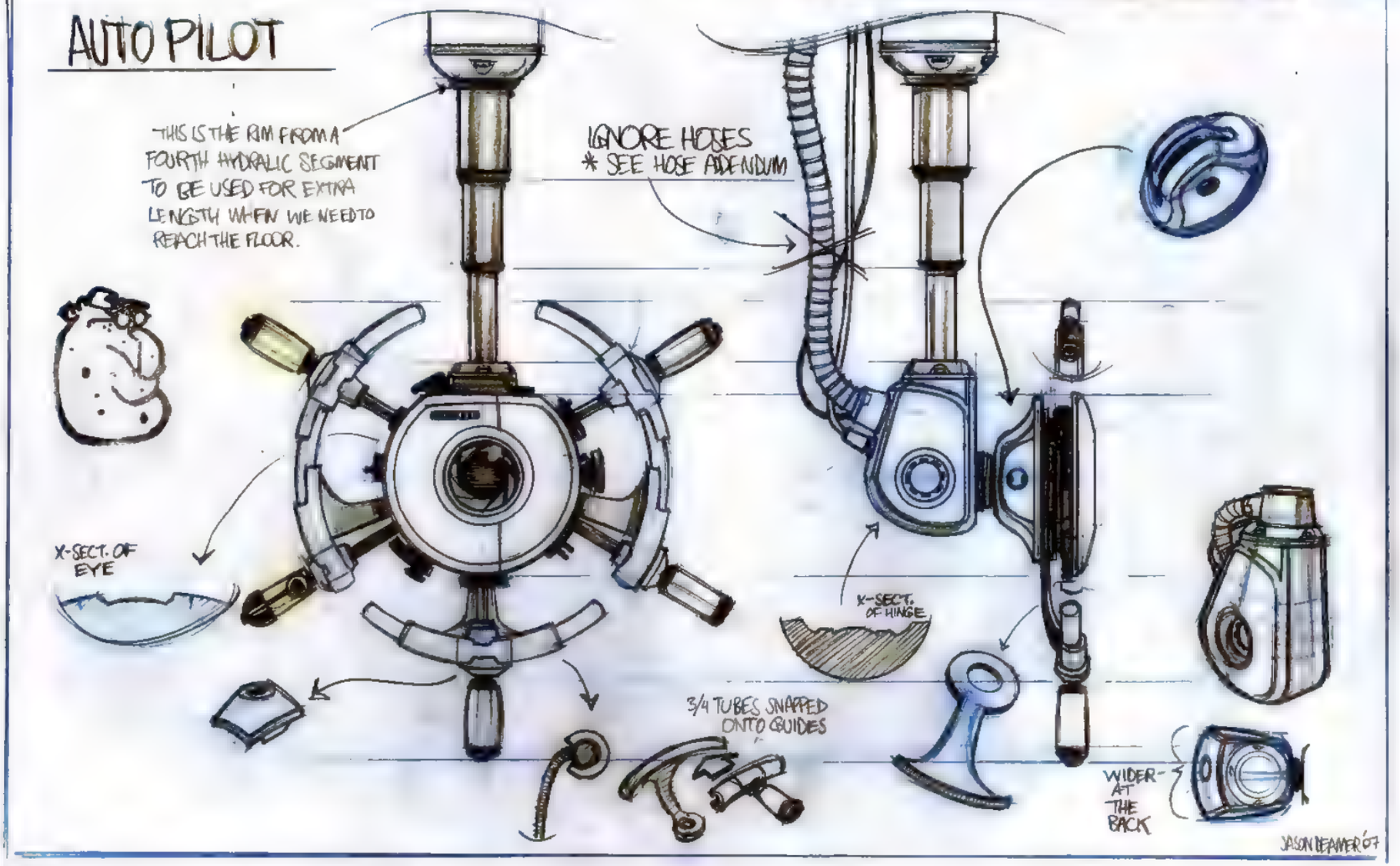


Derek Thompson, 2006, pen & pencil

Dan Holland, 2007, pen

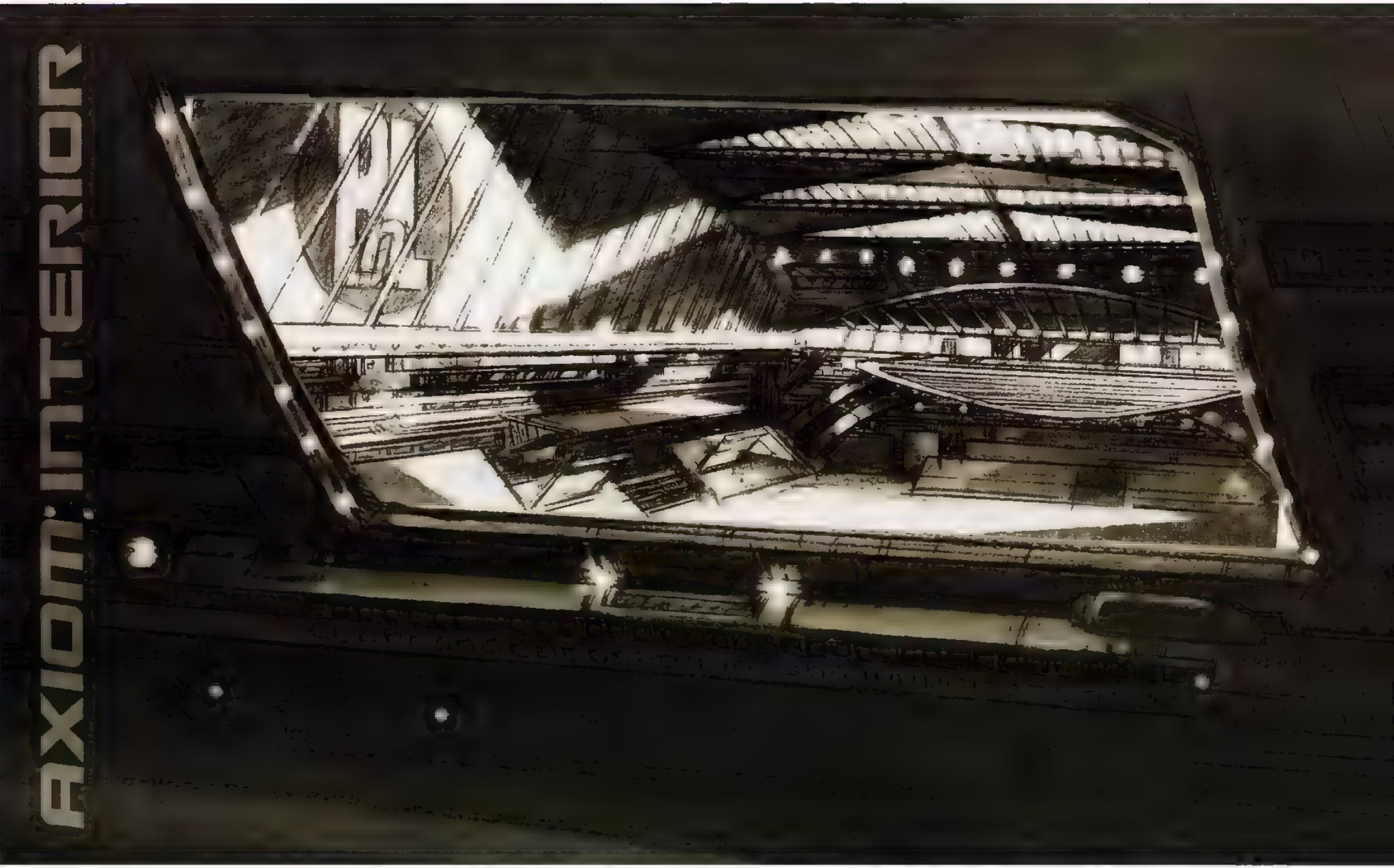
Jason Deamer, 2007, pen & marker





model packet: Jason Deamer, 2007, pencil

Anthony Christov & Nelson Bohol, 2005, colored pencil & digital



Nelson Bohol, 2006, pen & marker

drawing by Tony Fucile, painting by Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

Ralph Eggleston, 2004, digital

Ralph Eggleston, 2005, digital

Nate Stanton, 2004, marker

In the beginning, the film was very whimsical. The "gelatins" were a king and a queen and their court, and there was a floating palace in a giant bubble. We had bridges that stretched two miles and there was nothing really holding them up. We weren't worried about how gravity worked. But when they became human, we had to mix a more human element into this so we would feel this story could just happen to us.

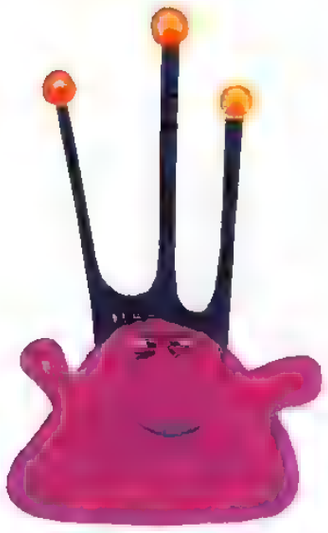
NOAH KLOCEK, *sketch artist*

Dan Holland, 2005, marker

Daniel Arriaga, 2005, digital

There was a big discussion about the humans and how we

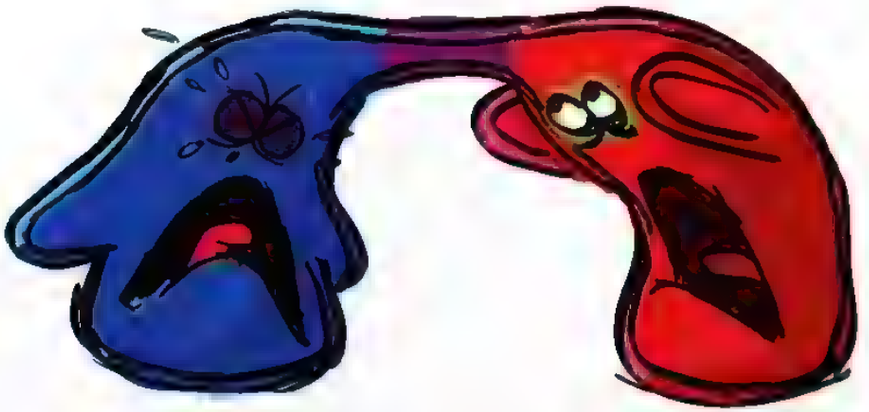
STEVE HUNTER, *animator*



Daniel Arriaga, 2005, digital

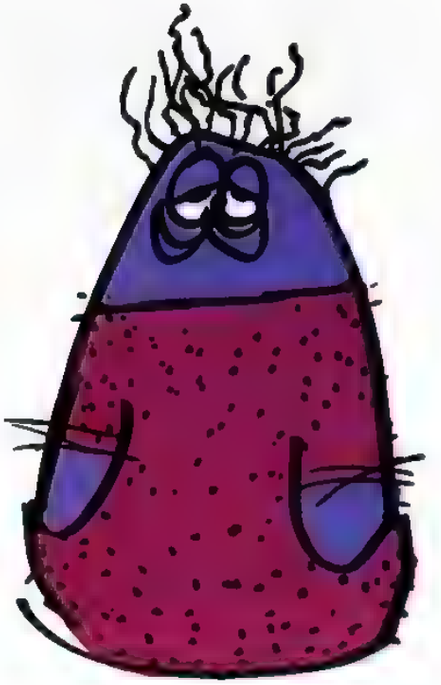
Daniel Arriaga, 2005, digital

Daniel Arriaga, 2005, marker & digital



Daniel Arriaga, 2005, marker & digital

Daniel Arriaga, 2005, marker & digital



Daniel Arriaga, 2005, marker & digital

Jennifer Chang, 2005, pencil & digital

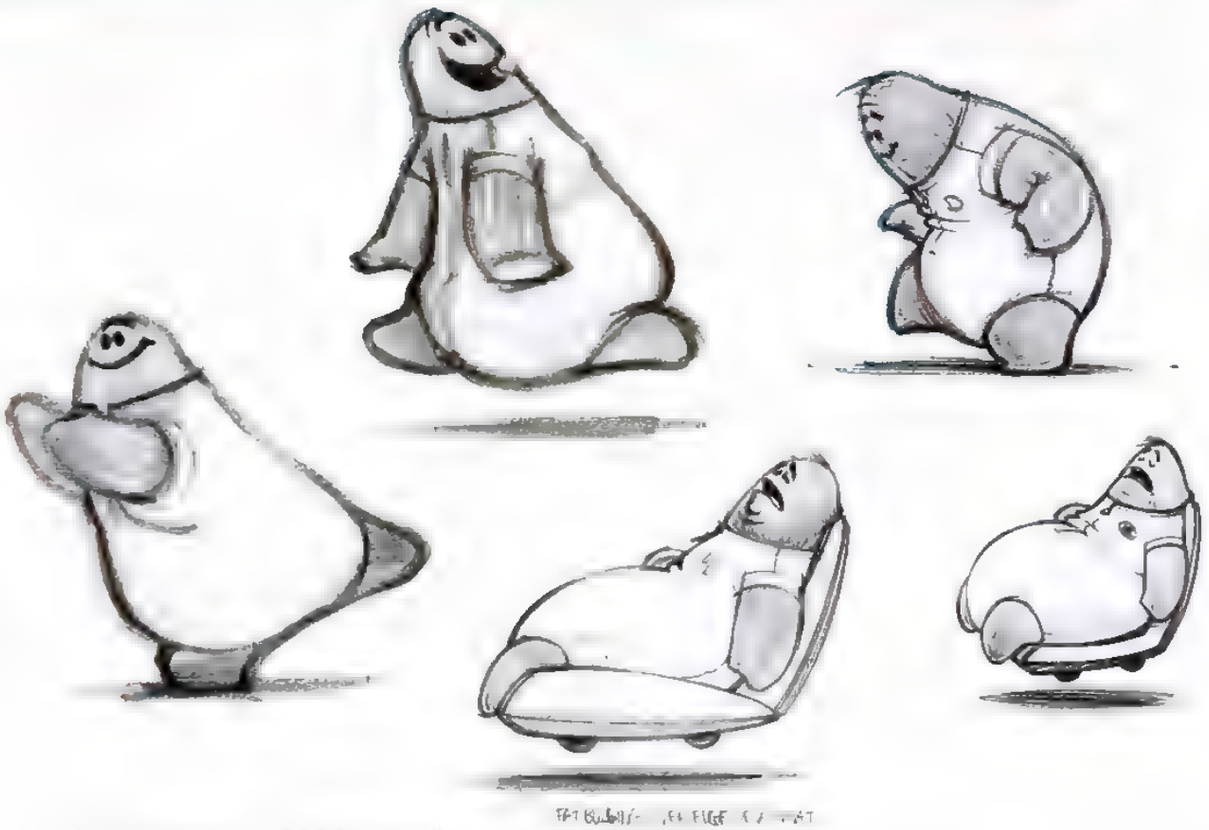
Jennifer Chang, 2005, pencil & digital

Jason Deamer, 2006, pencil

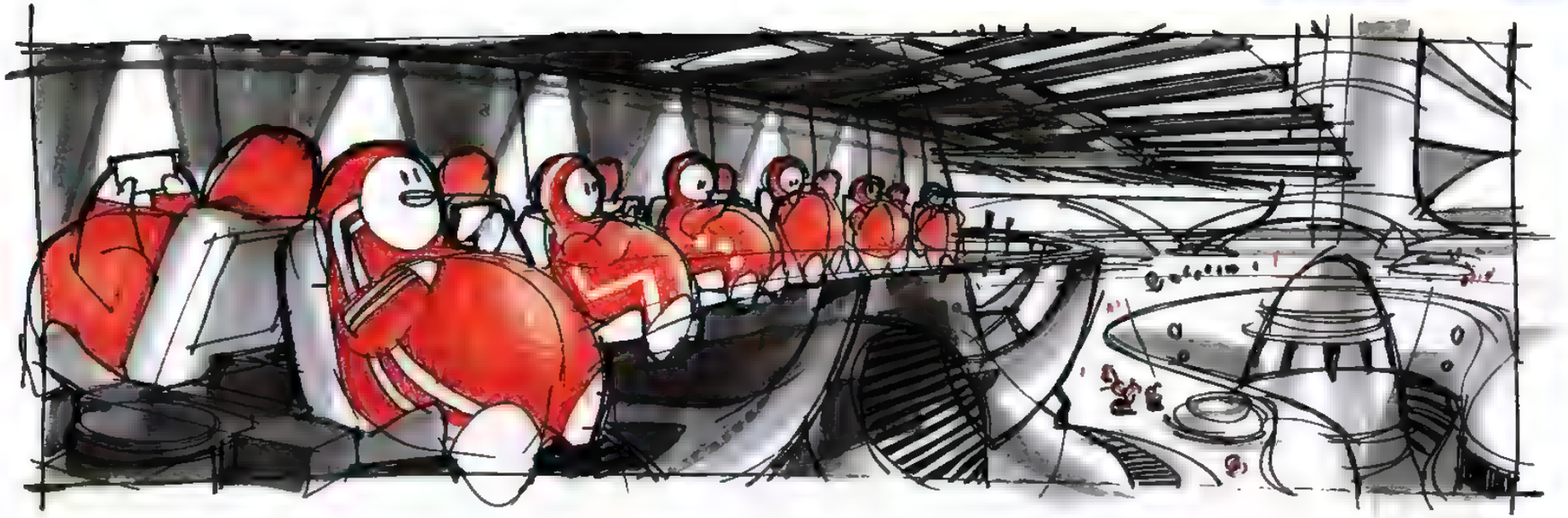
Originally, the "gels" were aliens and we gave them a Jell-O feel. We made Jell-O molds of them for the film to see what they would look like. The thing about Jell-O is that it melts pretty fast, so we put a tablespoon of vinegar in the glass and covered it, and it really stinks pretty bad, but it doesn't melt for, like, an hour and thirty minutes. We actually made a mold and put Jell-O in it, and had a little Jell-O spanking so we could see how it wiggled.

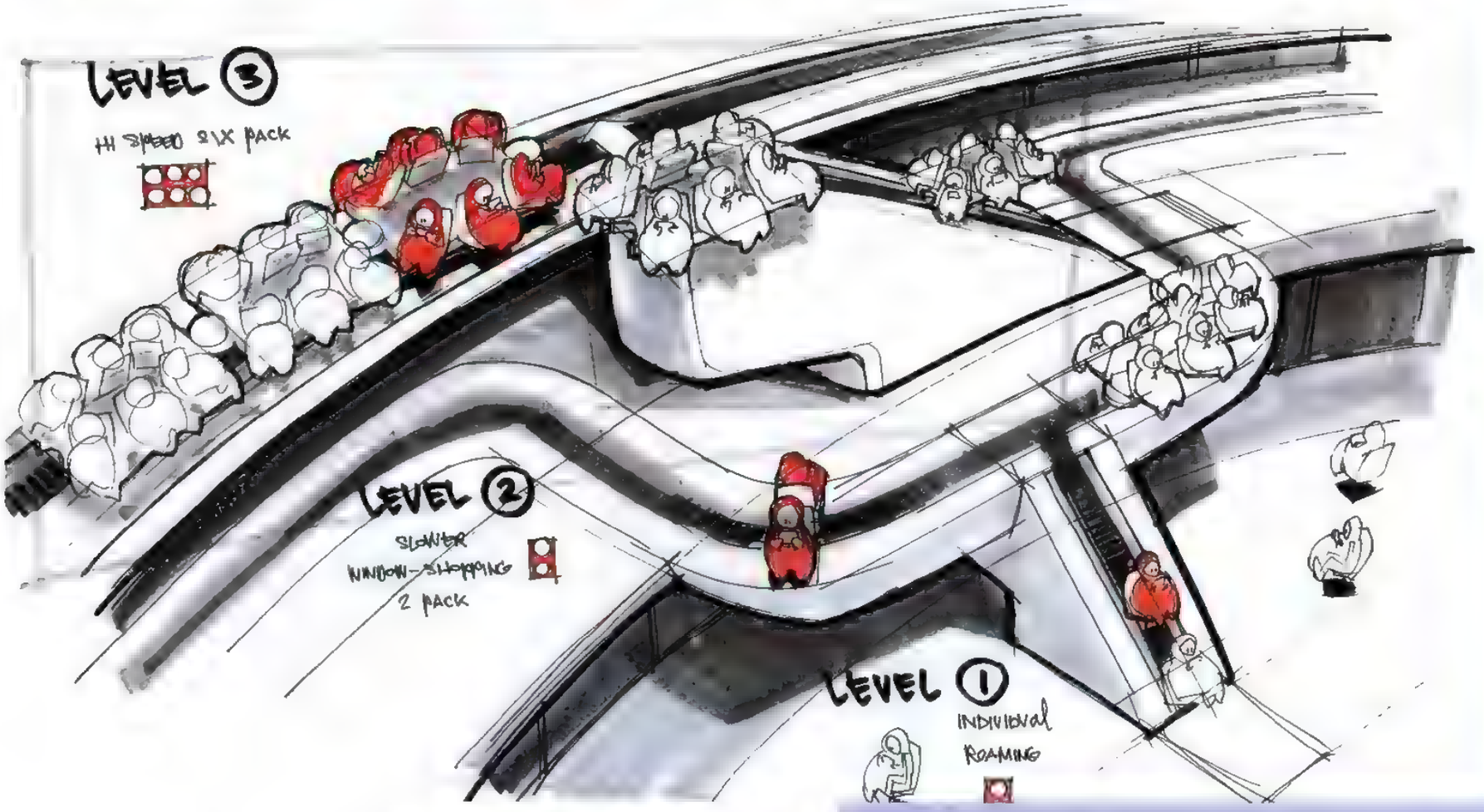
RALPH EGGLESTON, *production designer*

Daniel Arriaga, 2007, digital



Jason Deamer, 2006, pencil

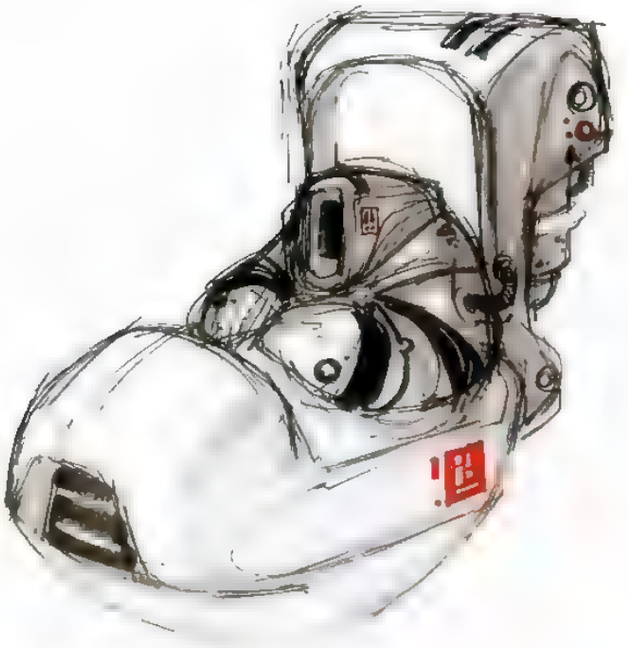


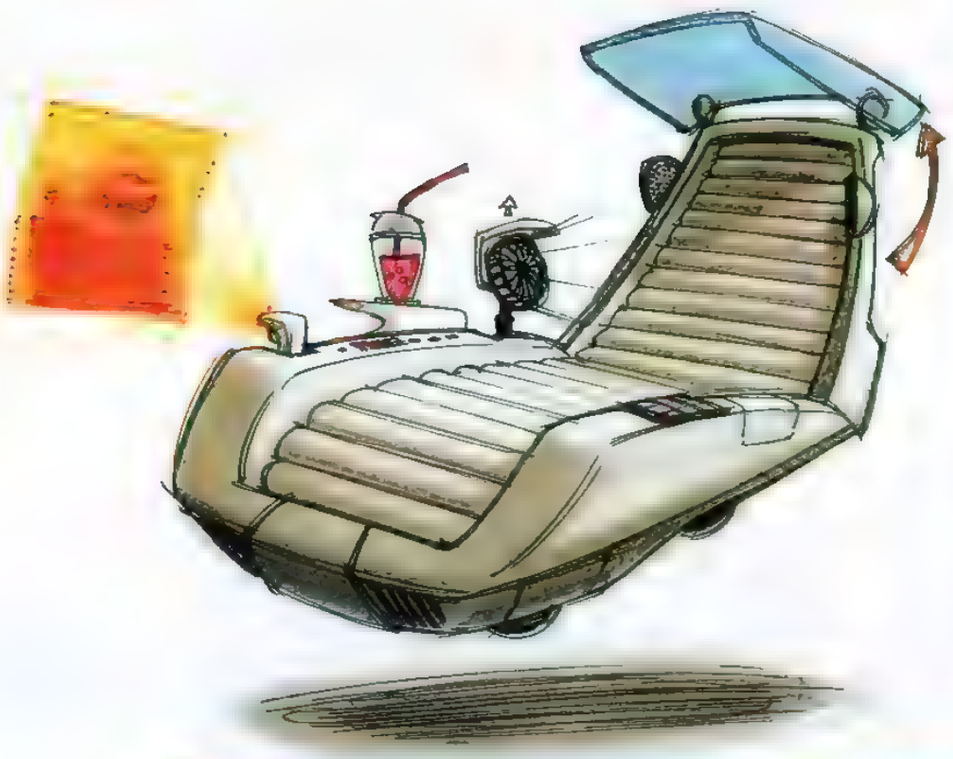


Jay Shuster, 2006, pen & marker

Dan Holland, 2004, pencil

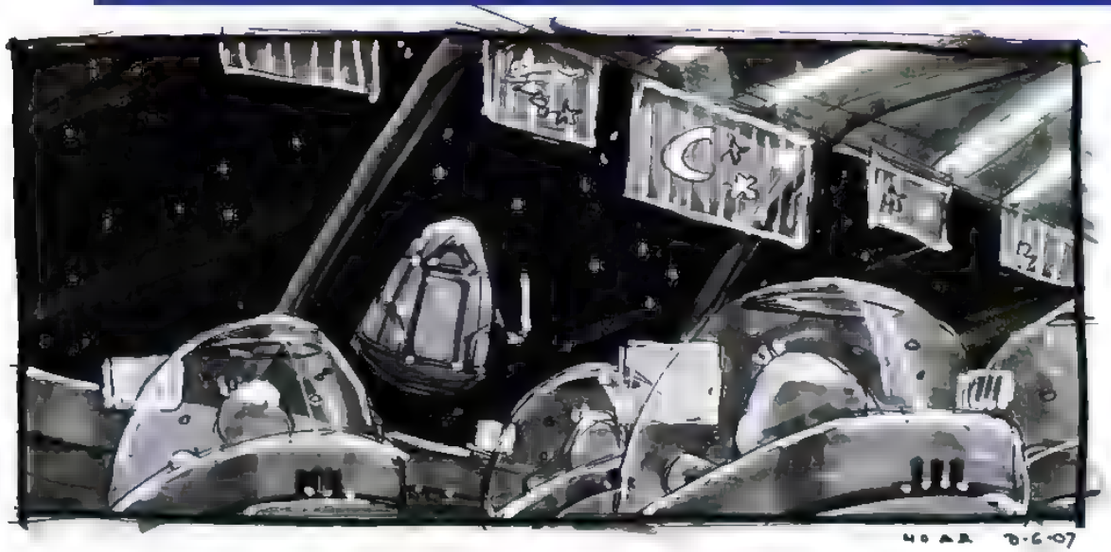
Dan Holland, 2005, marker

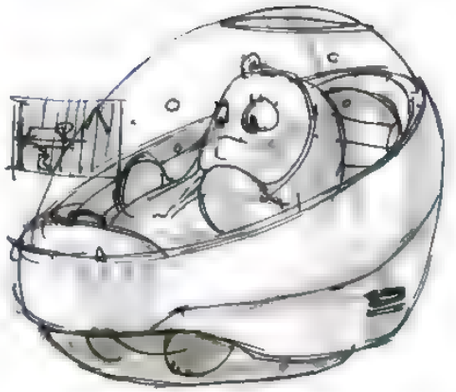


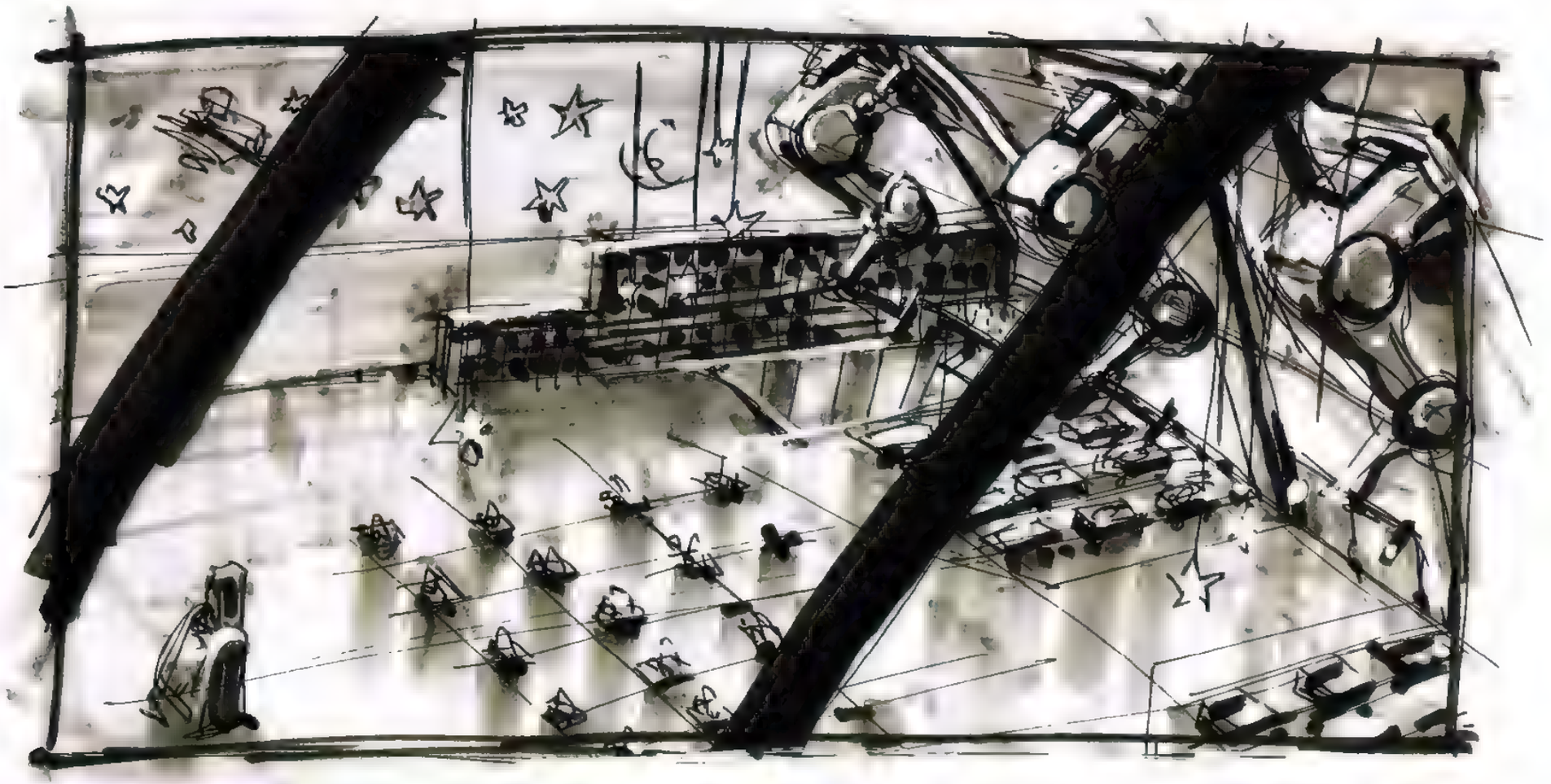


Jason Deamer, 2006, pencil & marker

Laura Phillips, 2007, digital





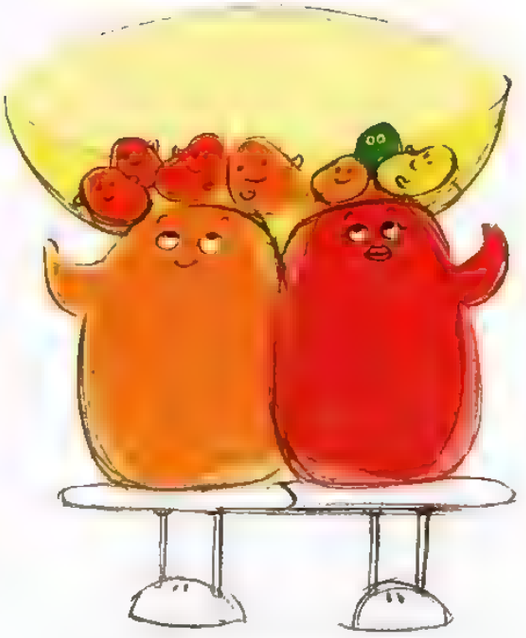


Noah Klocek. 2007. pen, marker & correction fluid

Jason Deamer, 2007, pen & digital

Jason Deamer, 2007, pen & digital

Jennifer Chang, 2005, pen & digital



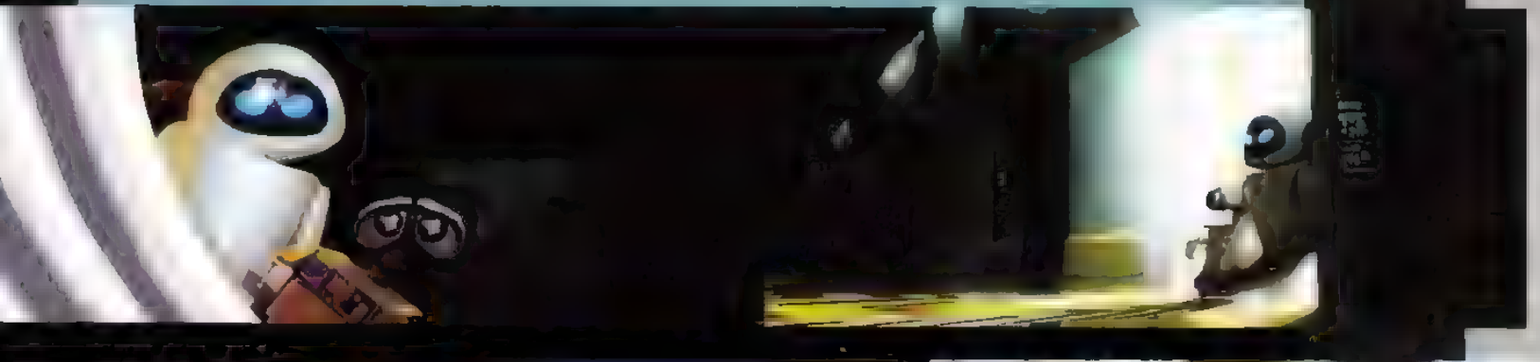
set painting: **Lori Klocek, 2007, digital**

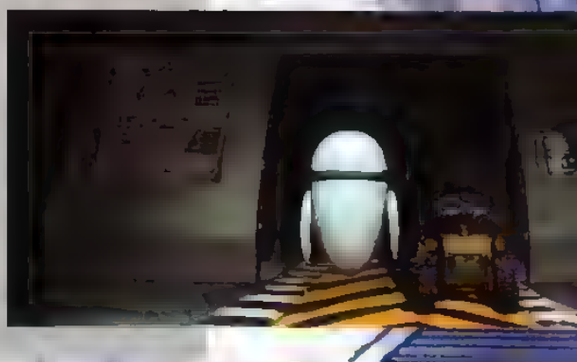
I came around to what the movie and the premise is for me. Irrational love defies life's programming. We all fall into our ruts. We all fall into our routines, our distractions, and our automations. And it just takes random acts of kindness, joy, love, to make you appreciate what you have or to get out of the rut that you're in. I felt this premise could apply to what the state of humanity had become, to what WALL•E was going through, and what EVE's robotic life was like before somebody awakened her.

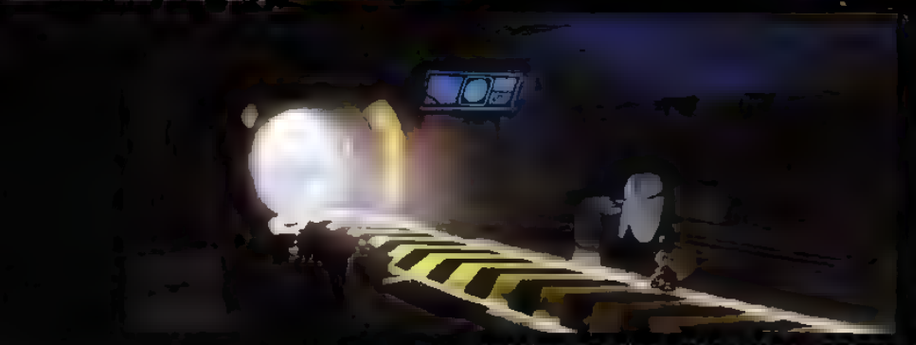
ANDREW STANTON, *director/writer*

Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital; layout by Jennifer Chang & Anthony Christov

John Lee, 2007, digital; layout by Jennifer Chang







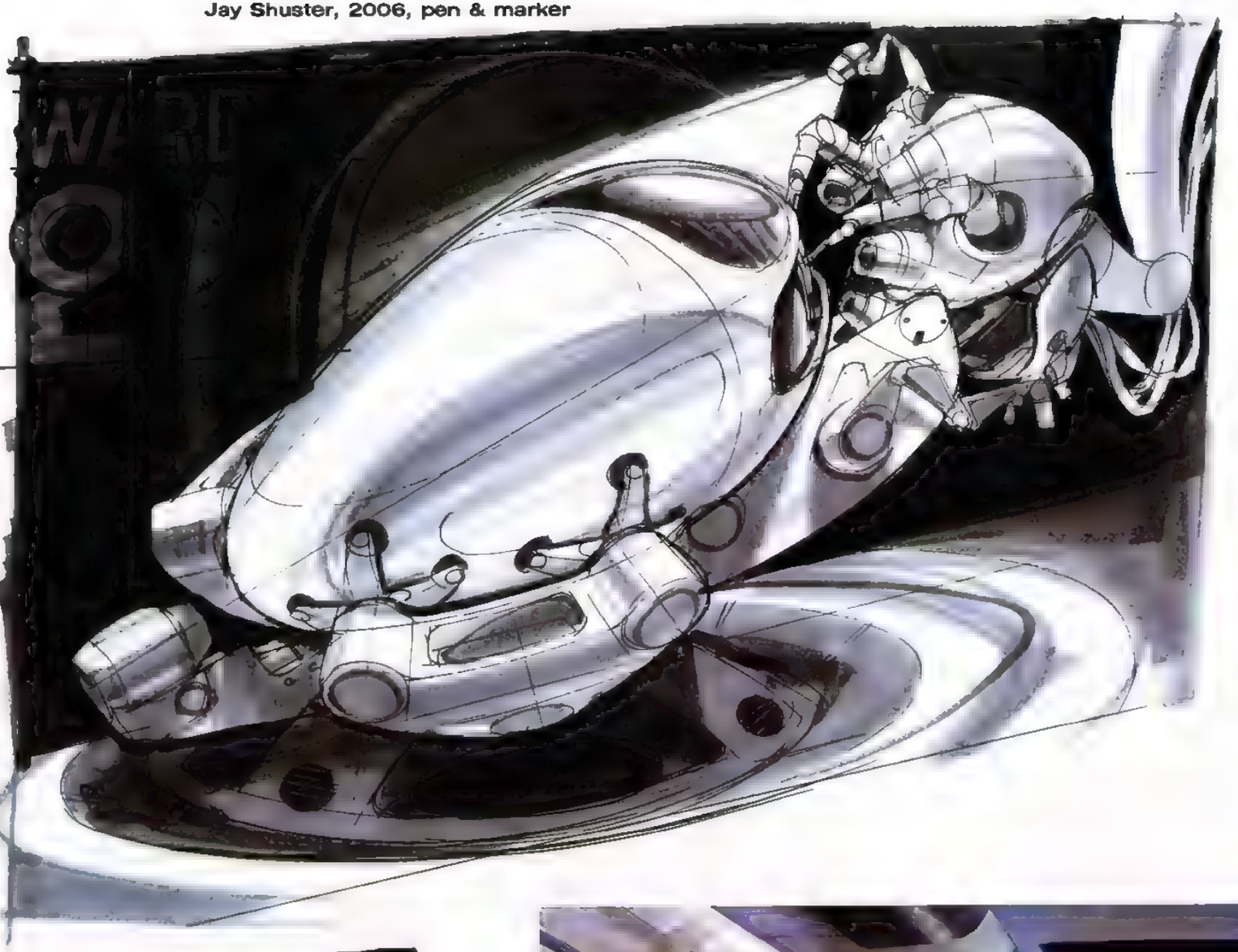
lighting studies John Lee, 2007, digital

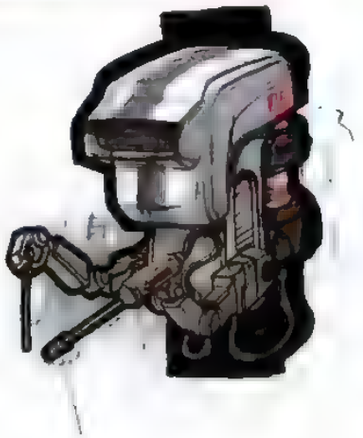
Anthony Christov & Jennifer Chang, 2007, pencil & digital

ESCAPE POD

REPAIR WARD

Jay Shuster, 2006, pen & marker

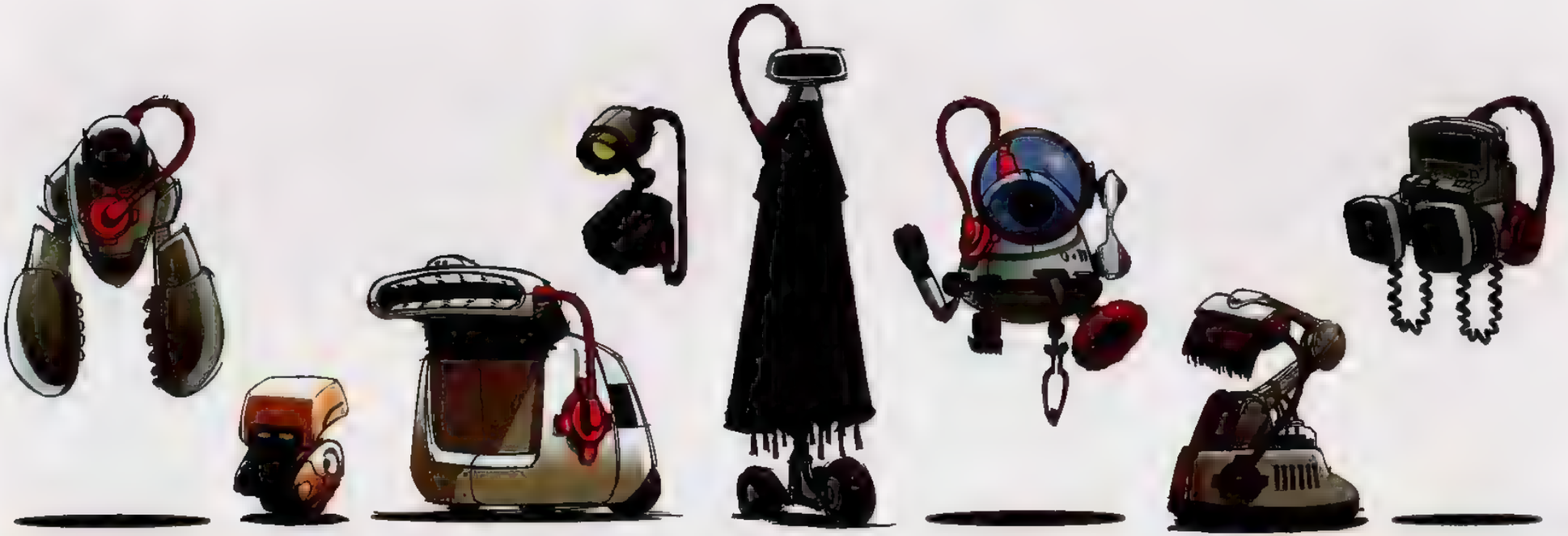




Dan Holland, 2007, marker

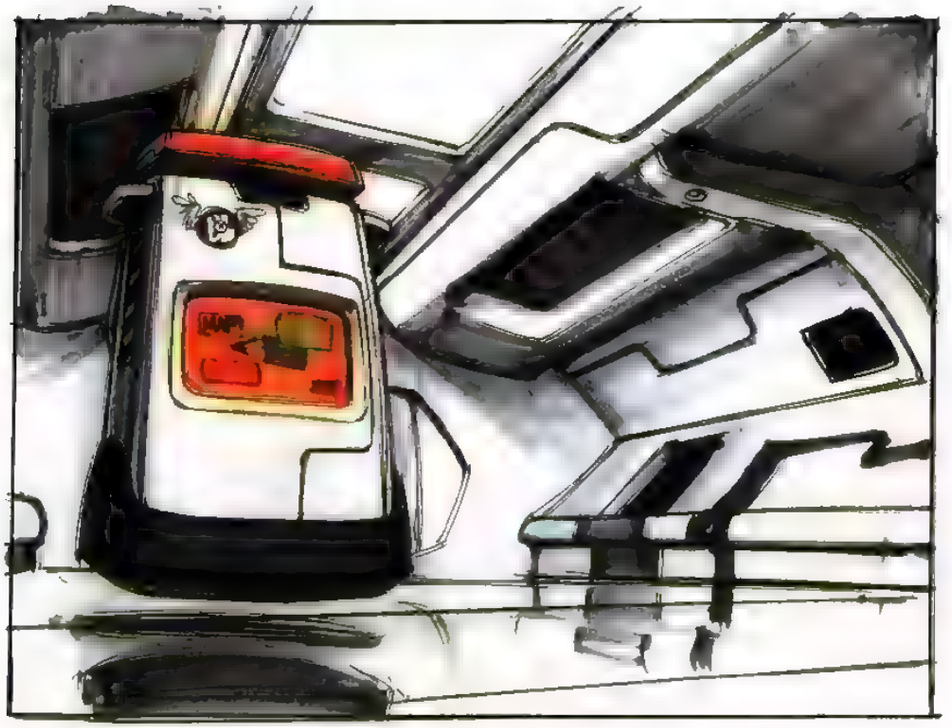
John Lee, 2007, digital; layout by Noah Klocek

Jason Deamer, 2006, digital

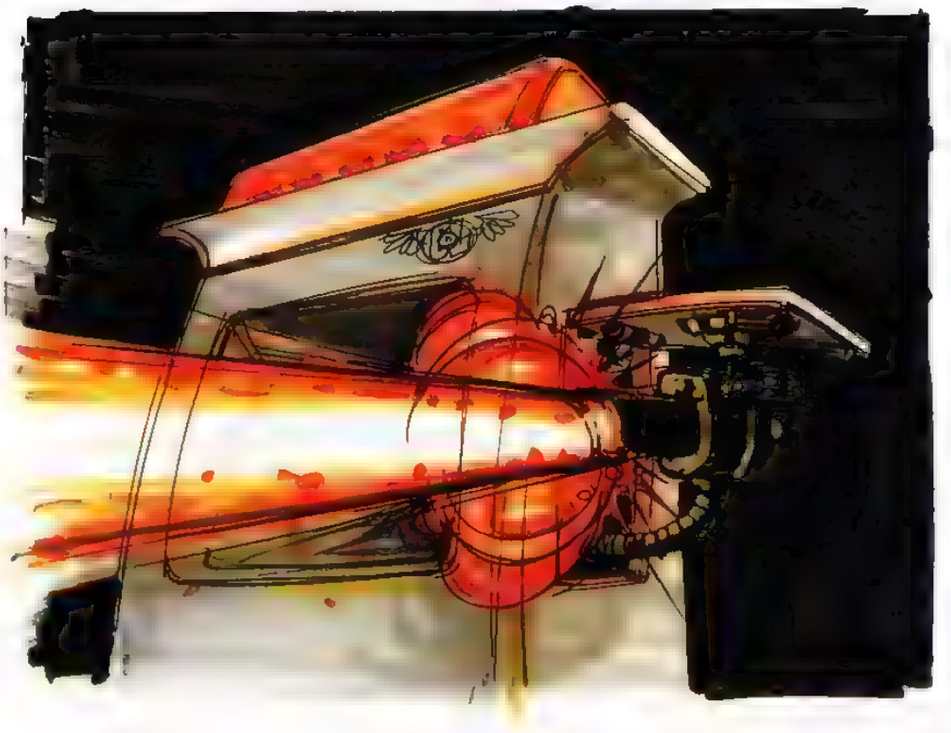


John Lee, 2006, digital; layout by Jay Shuster

Jason Deamer, 2007, pen & marker



Jason Deamer, 2007, pen & marker



Jason Deamer, 2006, digital

Dan Holland, 2006, pen & marker

Jason Deamer, 2006, pen & marker

shade paint: **Laura Phillips, 2007, digital**

Jason Deamer, 2006, pen & marker

Dan Holland, 2005, marker

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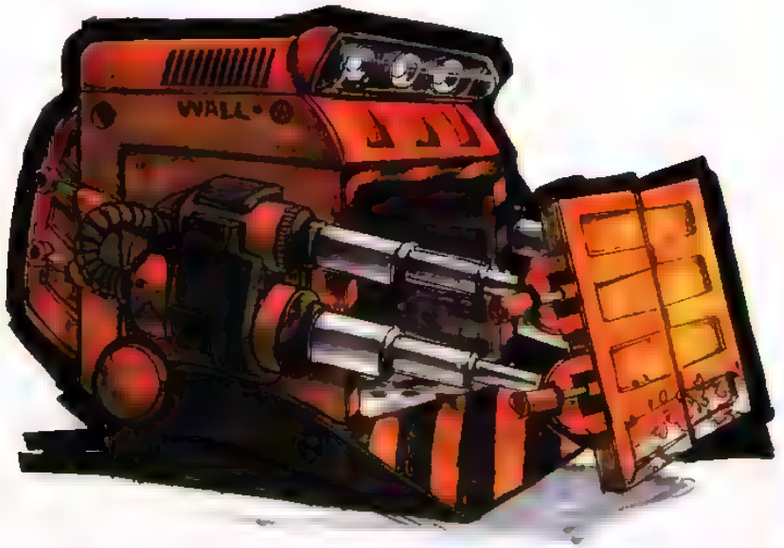
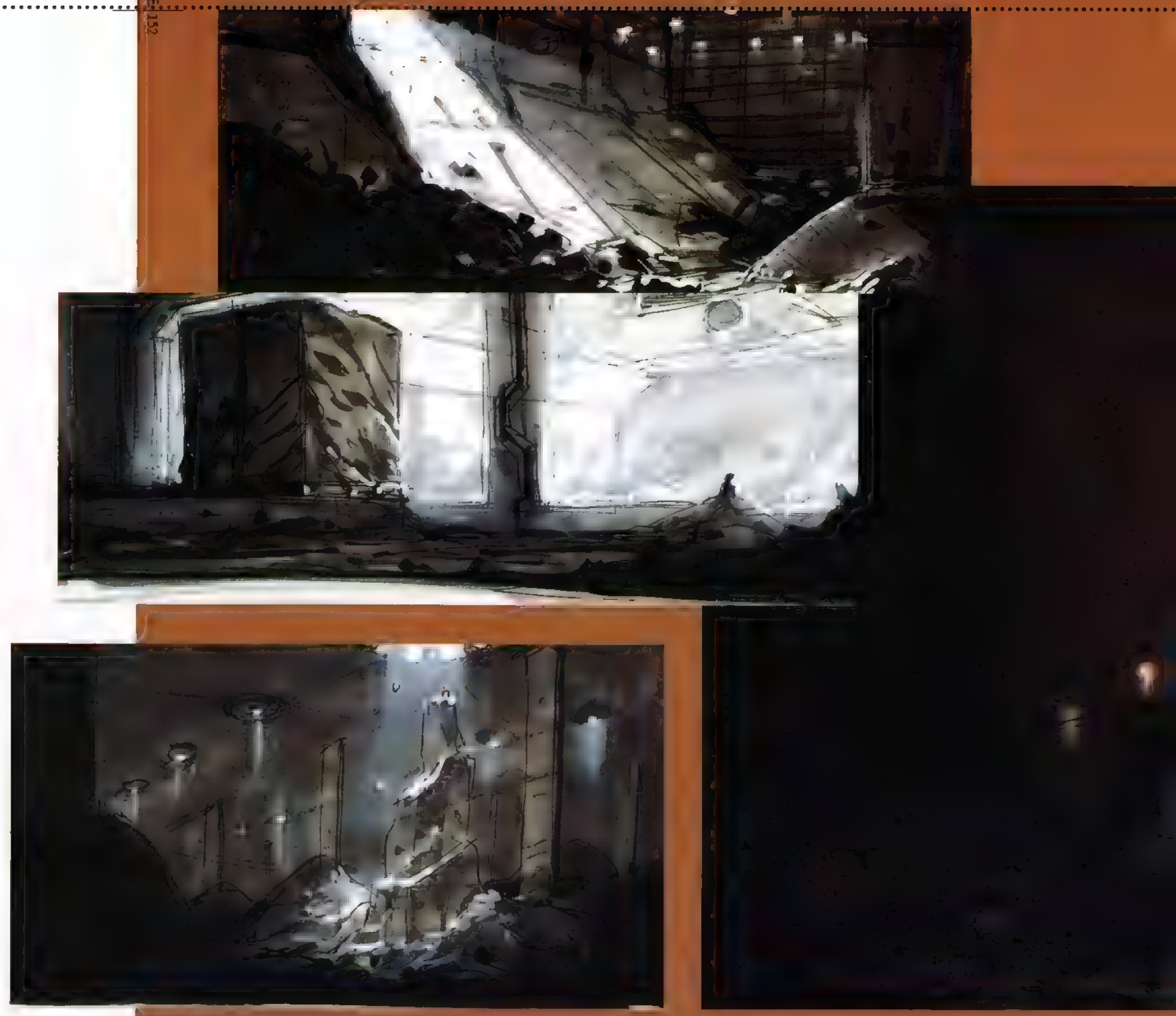


Jason Deamer, 2006, pen & marker

set painting: **John Lee, 2007, digital**

Ralph Eggleston & John Lee, 2007, digital; layout by Noah Klocek

GARBAGE AIRLOCK



Noah Klocek, 2006, pen, marker & correction fluid

Noah Klocek & John Lee, 2006, digital; layout by Noah Klocek

John Lee, 2006, digital

colorscripts: **Ralph Eggleston, 2007, digital**

Whether it's created with a camera, cartoon, or computer, there is no replacement for a good story. Memorable characters with relatable emotions will always be the key to a well-told tale.

POSTSCRIPT

"On this film, I think the love story has been Andrew's primary focus: 'How do we get that love story to feel real and get the emotion out of it?'" offers Lindsey Collins. "The idea that WALL•E holds the key to humanity," says Ralph Eggleston, "is my favorite. He's the one who is going to teach not only the humans how to be human again but also the robots how to be emotional. If there was one idea for this movie that I absolutely loved, it's that."

"That's been a challenge," Jim Reardon notes. "Getting emotion out of robots. And having them care for each other or think something bad could happen to them. I think that the motto of the company, and of Andrew when he's making a movie, is 'Make me care.' That's the toughest thing to do in making a movie—to have you care about the character. How many movies have you seen where they are just people moving across the screen? Even though it's well written or the plot is logical, or there are action scenes, at the end, you say, 'Do I really care about any of these people?' It seems to me that that's the number-one motive at this company: 'Make me care about the character.'"

The key to a lasting creation is in the heart, not the head. Cynicism creates distance, but sincerity comforts the child in all of us. "If there's any satire, it strictly serves a very low-level role in making you care about the characters," Reardon adds, "which I think is just following the Disney tradition, because Walt was not big on satire either. He wanted you to care about Pinocchio or the dwarfs or Snow White, and that's what these guys are trying to do. There are not a lot of people doing that."

"You often hear the term 'You should have something to say in a story,'" Andrew Stanton reminds us "But that doesn't always mean a message. It means truth. Some value that you as a storyteller believe in. And then, through the course of the story, you debate that truth, prove it wrong, test it to its limits."

Like EVE, the passengers of the *Axiom* discover that they are only one step away from breaking through to a brave new world. All they have to do is activate. "I just feel like it's very applicable to how people feel today. Or at least how I feel today," Stanton smiles. "And what I love is that the movie eventually came around to being about that."

The indelible impressions of *WALL•E* were not created by a word processor or software program, but by artists with the gift to visualize a story in dreams and express it in pictures for all of us.

"That process is what makes Pixar films great. It's the story. And that process is so vital to what we do," states John Lasseter. "We will stop production if we don't feel like the story is working, because, in the end, there are no excuses. Our goal is to make a movie that will last forever in the hearts and minds of families, from adults to kids. Like my favorite films, like *Dumbo* and *Bambi* and *Pinocchio*, they are going to last forever."

"You've got to make these movies great. First, for your audience, but also so that the people who worked so hard on your films will be proud. Then after a vacation, they rest and can't wait to find out what's next," says Lasseter. "And you see this in *WALL•E*. What Andrew has created is this thing that no one has ever seen before. To give the animators the chance to do something no one's ever done before is a great gift. 'The main character is in pantomime, guys. It's all you.' And they're like, 'Honey, I'm not coming home!'"

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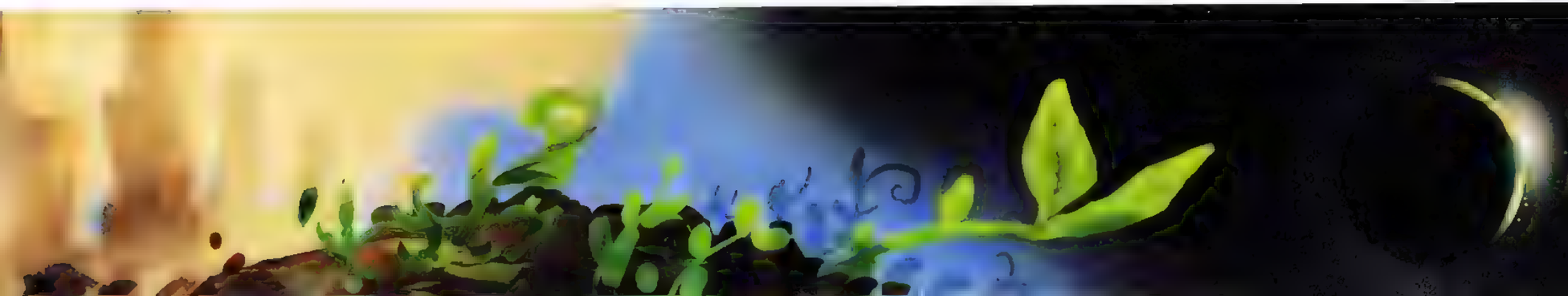

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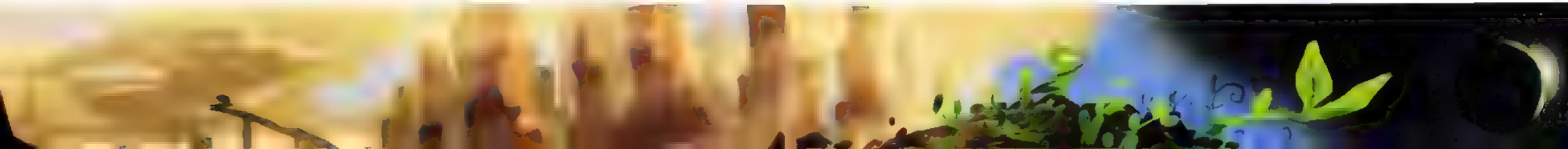

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PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS

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The text would not have been possible without the thoughts and memories of Pixar's Alan Barillaro, Bert Berry, Jason Bickerstaff, Chris Burrows, Tony Christov, Lindsey Collins, Jason Deamer, Pete Docter, Ralph Eggleston, Danielle Feinberg, Daniel Holland, Steve Hunter, Kris Klein, Noah Klocek, Jeremy Lasky, John Lasseter, Angus MacLane, Ellen Moon Lee, Jim Morris, Dave Munier, Tom Porter, Jim Reardon, Steve Schaffer, Andrew Stanton, Sophie Vincente, Andrea Warren, and Bill Wise, whose interview sessions were informative and colorful.

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We all owe a special debt to the late Joe Grant and Joe Ranft for helping to pass the art of visual storytelling to a new generation, and to Roy E. Disney for nurturing that legacy.

Most of all, I would like to express my thanks to Walt Disney, who showed us that our world could be brightened by optimism, wonder, and the spirit of youth.

TIM HAUSER

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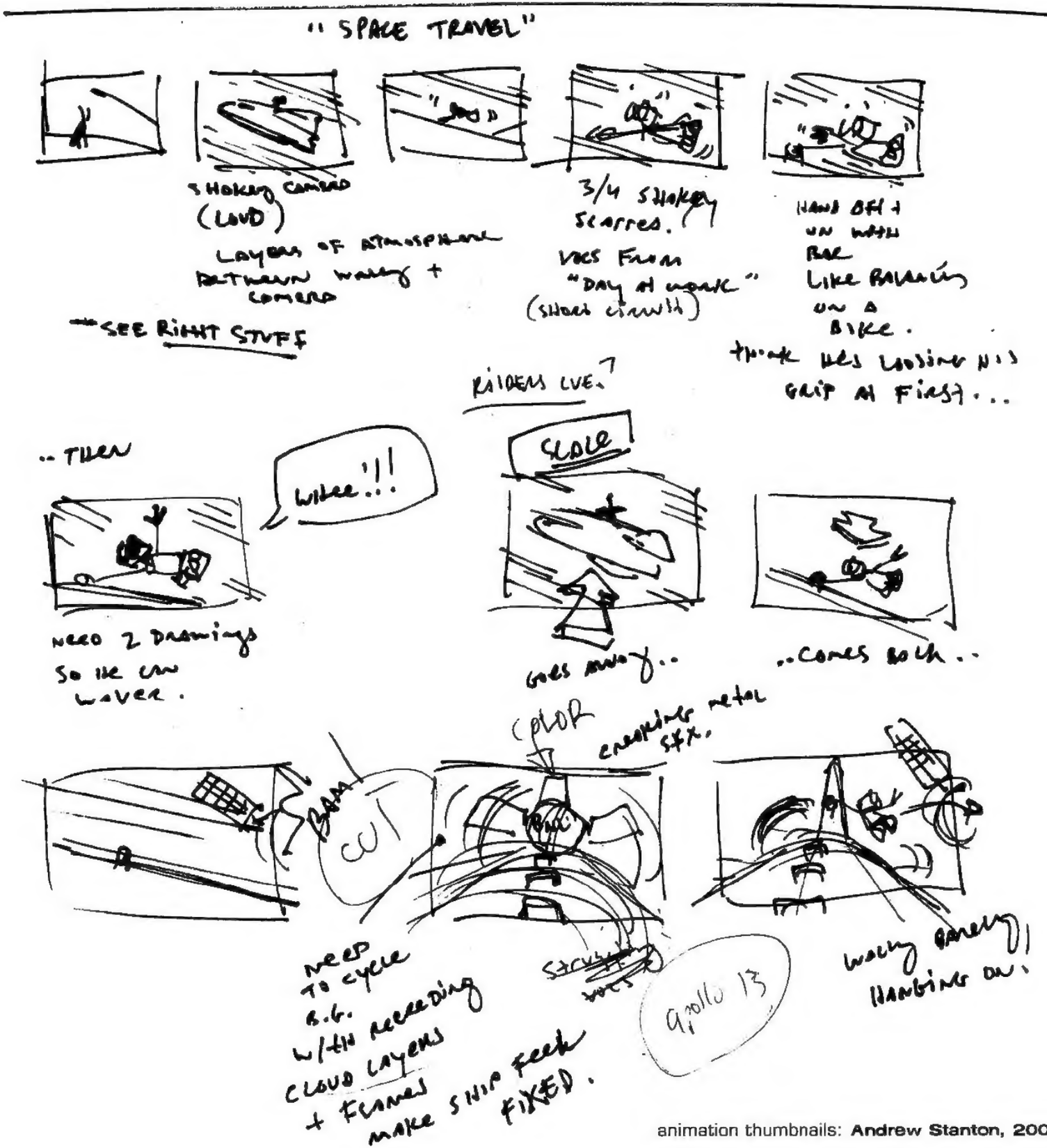
animation thumbnails: **Jim Reardon, 2005, pencil**



animation thumbnails: **Andrew Stanton, 2005, pencil**

The Academy Award-winning Pixar Animation Studios, who brought you *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, and *Cars*, has reaffirmed the power of animated storytelling with *WALL•E*. This wholly original film demanded an unprecedented amount of developmental art, and the best examples—storyboards, colorscripts, concept art, and pencil sketches—by the most talented artists in the industry are beautifully reproduced within these pages.